

THE
ANNALS
OF
ANN

KATE
TRIMBLE
SHARBER



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M. F. Bartlett

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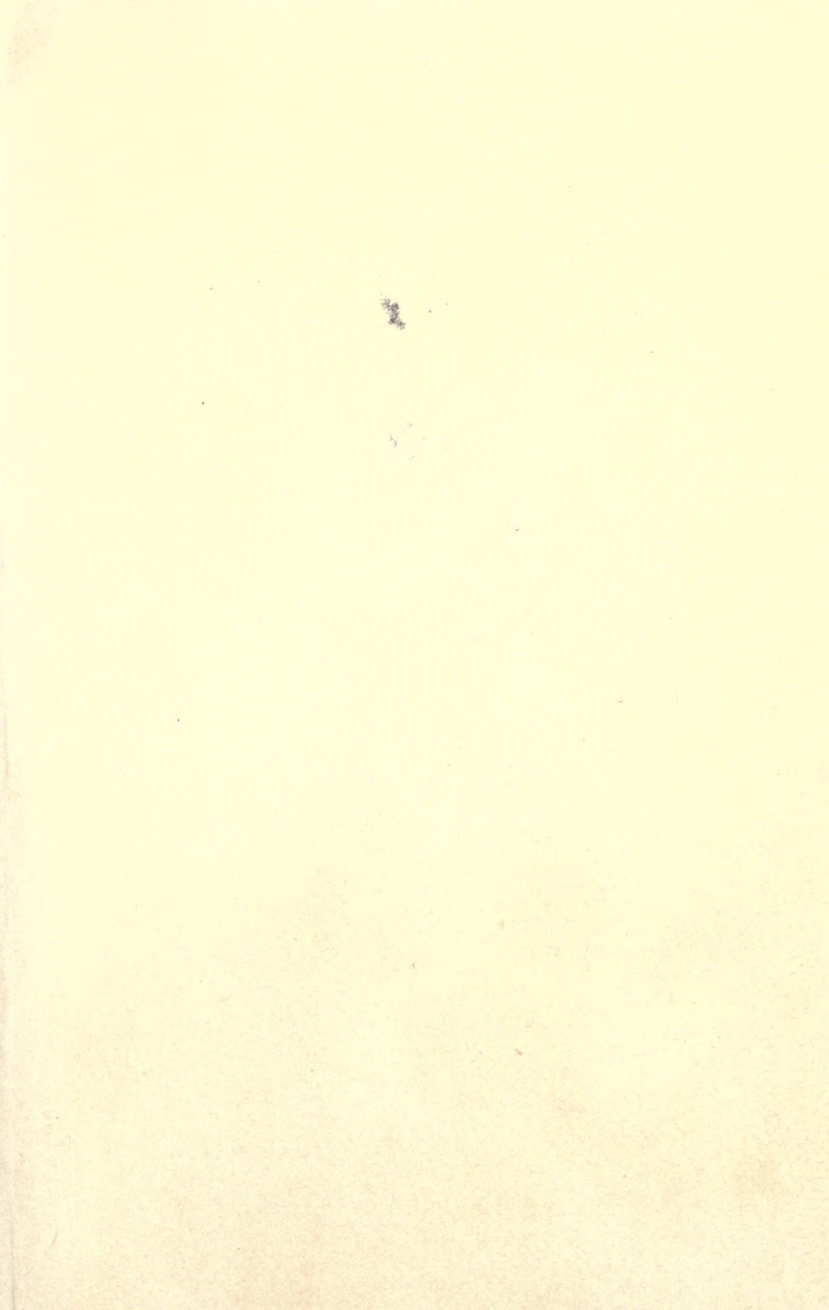
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THE ANNALS OF ANN







Ann

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By KATE TRIMBLE SHARBER



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BY PAUL J. MEYLAN

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CHAPTER I

MY Cousin Eunice is a grown young lady and she keeps a diary, which put the notion into my head of keeping one too.

There are two kinds of people that keep diaries, married ones and single ones. The single ones fill theirs full of poetry; the married ones tell how much it costs to keep house.

Not being extra good in grammar and spelling, I thought I'd copy a few pages out of Cousin Eunice's diary this morning as a pattern to keep mine by, but I was disappointed. Nearly every page I turned to in hers was filled full of poetry, which stuff never did make good sense

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to me, besides the trouble it puts you to by having to start every line with a fresh capital.

Cousin Eunice says nearly all famous people keep a diary for folks to read after they're dead. I always did admire famous people, especially Lord Byron and Columbus. And I've often thought I should like to be a famous person myself when I get grown. I don't care so much about graduating in white mull, trimmed in lace, as some girls do, for the really famous never graduate. They get expelled from college for writing little books saying there ain't any devil. But I should *love* to be a beautiful opera singer, with a jasmine flower at my throat, and a fresh duke standing at the side door of the theater every night, begging me to marry him. Or I'd like to rescue a ship full of drowning people, then swim back to shore and calmly squeeze the salt water out of my bathing suit, so the papers would all be full of it the next morning.

Things don't turn out the way you expect them to, though, and I needn't count too much

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on these things. I might catch cold in my voice, or cramps in the sea and never get famous; but I'm going to keep this diary anyhow, and just hand it down to my grandchildren, for nearly *every* lady can count on *them*, whether she's famous or infamous.

Maybe some rainy day, a hundred years from now, a little girl will find this book in the attic, all covered with dust, and will sit down and read it, while the rain sounds soft and pattery on the outside, and her mother calls and calls without getting an answer. This is not at all the right way to do, but what can they expect of you when your attic is such a very delicious place? Ours is high enough not to bump your head, even if you are as tall as my friend, Rufe Clayborne, and where a part of the window-pane is broken out an apple-tree sends in a perky little branch. Just before Easter every year I spend nearly all my time up here at this window, for the apple blossoms seem to have so many things to say to me; lovely things, that I can *feel*, but

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can not hear, and if I could write them down this would be the most beautiful book in the world. And great sheets of rain come sometimes; you can see them coming from the hills back of Mr. Clayborne's house, but the apple blossoms don't mind the wetting.

When I wrote "Mr. Clayborne" just then it reminded me of Cousin Eunice's diary. That was *one* sensible word which was on every page. Sometimes it was mixed up close along with the poetry, but I always knew who she meant, for he is my best friend and the grandest young man I've ever seen out of a book. His other name is Rufe, and he's an editor when he's in the city. But before he got to be an editor he was born across the creek from our farm, and we've always been great friends. His father and mine are also friends, always quarreling about whose bird-dogs and hotbeds are the best; and our mothers talk a heap about "original sin" and chow-chow pickle.

Maybe my grandchildren would like to know

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a few little things about me at the time I started keeping this diary for their sakes, so I'll stop now and tell them as quickly as I can, for I never did think just my own self was so interesting. If they have any imagination they can tell pretty well what kind of a person I was anyhow from the grand portrait I'm going to have painted for them in the gown I wear when I'm presented at court.

Well, I was born in the year—but if I tell that you will know exactly how old I am, that is if you can count things better than I can. Anyhow, when I read a thing I'd rather they didn't tell just how old the heroine is. Then you can have her any age you like best. Maybe if I were to tell exactly how many birthdays I've had you would always be saying, like mother and Mammy Lou, "You're a mighty big girl to be doing such silly things." Or like Rufe says sometimes, "Ann, you're entirely too young to be interested in such subjects as that." So you will have to be satisfied when I tell you that I'm at the

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“gawky age.” And a person is never surprised at anything that a girl at the “gawky age” does.

I am little enough still to love puppies and big enough to love Washington Irving. You might think these don't mix well, but they do. On rainy mornings I like to take a puppy under one arm and *The Alhambra* under the other, with eight or ten apples in my lap, and climb up in the loft to enjoy the greatest pleasure of my life. I sling *The Alhambra* up on the hay first, then ease the puppy up and take the hem of my skirt between my teeth so the apples won't spill out while I go up after them. But I never even look at hay when there's a pile of cottonseed to wallow in.

As to my ways, I'm sorry to say that I'm what mother calls a “peculiar child.” Mammy says I'm “the curiourest mixtry she ever seen.” That's because I ask “Why?” very often and then lots of times don't exactly believe that things are that way when they're told to me.

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One day at Sunday-school, when I was about four, the teacher was telling about Jonah. Mother often told me tales, some that I called "make-believe," and others that I called "so tales." When the teacher got through I spoke up and asked her if that was a "so tale." She said yes, it was, but I horrified every other child in the class by speaking up again and saying, "Well, me don't believe it!"

Old as I am now, I don't see how Jonah's constitution could have stood it, but I've got sense enough to believe many a thing that I can't see nor smell nor feel. An old man out in the mountains that had never been anywhere might say he didn't believe in electricity, but that wouldn't keep your electric light bill from being more than you thought it ought to be at the end of the month.

Speaking of bills reminds me of father. Father is not a rich man, but his folks used to be before the war. That's the way with so many people around here, they have more ancestry

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than anything else. Still, we have perfectly lovely smelling old leather books in our library, and when cotton goes high we go up to the city and take a suite of rooms with a bath.

I am telling you all this, my grandchildren, to let you know that you have blue blood in your veins, but you mustn't let yours get too blue. Father says it takes a dash of red blood mixed with blue, like turpentine with paint, to make it go.

Still, I hope the old place will be just as beautiful when my grandchildren get old enough to appreciate it as it is now, and not be sold and turned into a sanitarium, or a girls' school. The walls of the house are a soft grayish white, like a dear old grandmother's hair; and the mycra-vella roses in the far corner of the yard put *such* notions into your head! There are rows of cedar trees down the walk, planted before Andrew Jackson's time; and at night there are the stars. I love stars, especially Venus; but there are a lot of others that I don't know the names of.

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Inside, the house is cool and shady; and you can always find a place to lie down and read. Cousin Eunice says so many people spoil their houses by selecting carpets and wall-paper that look like they want to fight. But ours is not like that. Some corners in our library look like *Ladies' Own Journal* pictures.

Cousin Eunice doesn't belong to our house, but I wish she did, for she's as beautiful as a magazine cover. And I think we have the nicest home in the world. Besides being old and big and far back in the yard, there's always the smell of apples up-stairs. And I'm sure mother is the nicest lady in the world. She wants everybody to have a good time, and no matter whether you're a man, a young lady, or a little girl, she lets you scatter your pipes, love-letters and doll-rags from the front gate to the backest chicken-coop without ever fussing. Mother admires company greatly. She doesn't have to perspire over them herself, though, for she has Mammy Lou to do all the cooking and Dilsey to

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make up the beds. So she invited Cousin Eunice to spend the summer with us and asked Bertha, a cousin on the other side, to come at the same time, for she said girls *love* to be together. We soon found out, though, that some girls do and some don't.

Cousin Eunice said I might always express my frank opinion of people and things in my diary, so I take pleasure in starting in on Bertha. Bertha, she is a *cat!* Even Rufe called her one the night she got here. Not a straight-out cat, exactly, but he called her a kitten!

You see, when Bertha was down here on a little visit last year she and Rufe had up a kind of summer engagement. A summer engagement is where the girl wears the man's fraternity pin instead of a ring. And when she came again this time it didn't take them two hours to get summer engaged again, it being moonlight on the front porch and Bertha looking real soft and purry.

Then the very next week Cousin Eunice came!

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And poor Rufe! We all felt *so* sorry for him, for, from the *first* minute he looked at her he was in love; and it's a terrible thing to be in love and engaged at the same time, when one is with *one* girl and the other to another! And it was so plain that the eyes of the *potatoes* could see it! But Bertha hadn't an idea of giving up anybody as good-looking as Rufe to another somebody as good-looking as Cousin Eunice, which mother said was a shame, and *she* never did such a thing when *she* was a girl; but Mammy Lou said it was no more than Rufe deserved for not being more careful.

But anyway, Cousin Eunice and Bertha hadn't been together two days before they hated each other so they wouldn't use the same powder rag! They just couldn't bear the sight of each other because they could both bear the sight of Rufe so well. This was a disappointment to me, for I had hoped they would go into each other's rooms at night and brush their hair, half undressed, and have as good a time as the pictures

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of ladies in underwear catalogues always seem to be having. But they are not at all friendly. They have never even asked each other what make of corsets they wear, nor who operated on them for appendicitis. Bertha talks a great deal about Rufe and how devoted he was to her last summer, but Cousin Eunice won't talk at all when Bertha's around. She sits still and looks dumb and superior as a trained nurse does when you are trying to find out what it is that the patient has got.

Cousin Eunice has a right to act superior, though, for while other girls are spending their time embroidering chafing-dish aprons she is studying books written by a man with a name like a sneeze. Let me get one of the books to see how it is spelled. N-i-e-t-z-s-c-h-e! There! I got it down at last! And Cousin Eunice doesn't have just a plain parlor at home to receive her beaux in; she has a studio. A studio is a room full of things that catch dust. And the desire of her life is to write a little brown-backed book

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that people will fill full of pencil marks and always carry around with them in their suit-cases. She doesn't neglect her outside looks, though, just because her mind is so full of great thoughts. No indeed! Her fountain pen jostles against her looking-glass in her hand-bag, and her note-book gets dusted over with pink powder.

Now, Bertha is entirely different! No matter how the sun is shining outside she spends all her mornings up in her room shining her fingernails; and she wears *pounds* and *pounds* of hair on the back of her head. Father says the less a girl has on the inside the more she will stick on the outside of her head, and lots of men can't tell the difference. Bertha certainly isn't at a loss for lovers. She gets a great many letters from a "commercial traveler." A "commercial traveler" is a man who writes to his girl on different hotel paper every day. These letters are a great comfort to her spirit when Rufe acts so loving around Cousin Eunice; and she always

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has one sticking in her belt when Rufe is near by, with the name of the hotel showing.

Every night just before or just after supper I always go out to the kitchen and tell Mammy Lou all the news I've seen or heard that day. She laughs when I tell her about how Bertha is trying to hold on to Rufe.

“'Tain't a speck o' use,” she said to-night so emphatically that I was afraid the omelette would fall. “Why, a camel can dance a Virginy reel in the eye of a needle quicker than a gal can sick a man back to lovin' her after he's done took a notion to change the picture he wears in his watch!”

Mammy told the truth, I'm sure, for Bertha has worn all her prettiest dresses and done her hair two new ways, trying to get him back; but he is still “coldly polite,” which I think is the meanest way on earth to treat a person. Not that Bertha doesn't deserve it, for she knew they were just joking about that summer engage-

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ment, but she still wears the fraternity pin, which of course causes Cousin Eunice to be "coldly polite" to Rufe; and altogether we don't really need a refrigerator in the house this summer.

Mammy Lou and I had been trying to think up a plan to thaw out the atmosphere, but this morning a way was provided, and I greatly enjoyed being "an humble instrument," as Brother Sheffield says.

Everything was draggy this morning. Bertha was down in the parlor singing "popular songs" very loud as I came down the steps with my diary in my hand. I *despise* popular songs! As I went past the kitchen door on my way to the big pear tree which I meant to climb and write in my book I saw that Mammy Lou was having the time of her life telling Cousin Eunice all about when Rufe was a baby. She had called her in there to get some fresh buttermilk, and Cousin Eunice was drinking glass after glass of it with such a rapt look on her face I knew she

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didn't realize that she couldn't get on her tight clothes till mid-afternoon.

"Of *course* he's a extry fine young man!" mammy said, dipping for another glassful. "There never was nary finer baby—an' wasn't I *right there* when Mr. Rufe was born?"

"Sure enough!" Cousin Eunice said, looking entranced.

This wasn't much more entertaining to me than Bertha's singing, for I had heard it all so many times before, so I went out to the pear tree and climbed up, but I couldn't think of even one word that would be of interest to my grandchildren. So I just wrote my name over and over again on the fly-pages. I wonder what makes them call them "fly-pages?" Then I closed my book and climbed down again. I started back to the house by the side way, and met Rufe coming up the walk toward the front door.

"Hello, Rufe," I said, running to meet him and walking with him to the front steps. "I'm

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so glad to see you. Everything is so draggy this morning. Won't you sit on the steps and talk to me a while? Or are you in a hurry?"

"I'm always in a hurry when I'm going to your house," he answered with a look in the direction of Cousin Eunice's window. "And my visits always seem as short as a wedding journey when the bridegroom's salary is small."

He dusted off the step, though, and sat down; and I told him that Cousin Eunice was drinking buttermilk in her kimono and wouldn't be in a mood to dress for another hour. Then I told him what a hard time I'd had trying to think up something interesting to write in my diary. He said, looking again toward Cousin Eunice's window, that there was only *one* thing in the world to write about! But he supposed I was too young to know anything about that. I spoke up promptly and told him a girl never *got* too young to know about love.

"Love!" he said, trying to look surprised. "Who mentioned love?"

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Just then I heard the flutteration of a silk petticoat on the porch behind the vines, but Rufe was gazing so hard at the blue hills on the far side of town that he didn't hear it. So, without saying anything to him, I leaned over far enough to look under the banisters, and saw the bottom of Bertha's skirt and a skein of blue silk thread lying on the floor. So I knew she was sitting there working on that everlasting chafing-dish apron. Then Satan put an idea into my head. I think it was Satan.

"Rufe," I said, talking very loud and quick, so Bertha would just *have* to hear me, "what's the difference between a kitten and a cat?"

Rufe at last got his eyes unfixed from the blue hills and just stared at me foolishly for a second.

"Am I the parent of a child that I should have to answer fool questions?" he said.

"But the night she came you called Bertha a *kitten!*" I reminded him, and he looked worse surprised. "And since I've heard her called a

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cat! How long does it take a kitten to grow into a cat?"

"Oh, I see! Well, I'm better versed in feline ways now than I was that night; so I might state that sometimes you discover that a kitten *is* a cat! There isn't any difference!"

We heard a clattering noise behind the vines just then, which I knew was Bertha dropping her embroidery scissors. Rufe jumped, for he had no idea anybody was hearing our conversation; and I know he wouldn't have said what he did about cats except he *thought* I was too little to understand such figures of speech. Then he got up to go in and see who it was. And I decided to disappear around the corner of the house. I didn't altogether disappear before I heard her say indeed he *had* meant to call her a cat; and he said indeed he hadn't, but she hadn't been "square" with him, and they talked and talked until I got uneasy that Cousin Eunice would be coming through the hall and hear them. So I hurried on back to head her off. But

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Satan, or whoever it was, put me up to a good job in that, for the next time I saw Rufe he was wearing his fraternity pin and a happy smile. And Bertha had red spots on her face, even as late as dinner-time, like consumption that lovely heroines die of.

I've been too disappointed lately to write in my diary. Somehow, I think like Rufe, that there's only one thing worth writing about, and there's been very little in that line going on around here lately. Poor Rufe is having a harder time now than he had when Bertha was on his hands, for Cousin Eunice has taken it into her head to show him that she doesn't have to accept him the minute he gets untangled from a summer flirtation. Those were her very words.

She and I go for long walks with him every morning, down through the ravine; and they read poetry that sounds so good you feel like somebody's scratching your back. And she wears her best-fitting shirtwaists. One good

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thing about Cousin Eunice is that her clothes never look like she'd sat up late the night before to make them. And when she's expecting him at night her eyes shine like they had been greased; and I can tell from the way she breathes quick when she hears the gate open that she loves him. Yes, she adores the sound of his rubber heels on the front porch; but she won't give in to him. She's punishing him for the Bertha part of it. Mother says she's very foolish, for men will be men, especially on nights in June; but Mammy Lou says she's exactly right; and I reckon mammy knows best, for she's been married a heap more times than mother ever has.

"The longer you keep a man feelin' like he's on a red-hot stove the better he loves you," Mammy Lou told Cousin Eunice to-night, as she was powdering her face for the last time before going down-stairs and trying to keep us from seeing that she was listening for a foot-step on the gravel walk. "An' a husban's got to be treated jus' like a lover! A good, heavy

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poker's a fine thing to make a husban' know 'is place—an' Lawk! a lazy husban's like a greasy churn—you have to give him a thorough scaldin' to do any good!"

This morning at the breakfast table, after father had helped the plates to chicken, saving two gizzards for me, he said: "Times have changed since I was a young man!"

As this wasn't exactly the first time we had heard such a remark none of us paid any attention to it until we saw mother trying to make him hush. Then we knew he must be starting to say something funny about Cousin Eunice and Rufe, for mother always stops him on this subject whenever she can, because she doesn't want Bertha's feelings hurt. But Bertha never seems to mind. She's decided to marry the commercial traveler, I'm almost sure, although her people say he's not "steady." Steady means staying still, so who ever heard of a traveling man who was steady?

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“Times have changed, especially about courting,” father kept on, pretending that he didn’t see mother shaking her head at him. When father gets that twinkle in his eye he can’t see anything else. “Now in *my* young days when a girl and a fellow looked good to each other they usually got engaged at once. But *now*—jumping Jerusalem! No matter how deeply in love they are they waste days and days trying to get a ‘complete understanding’ of each other’s nature. They talk about their opinion of everything under the sun, from woman’s suffrage to Belshazzar’s feast.”

“Lord Byron wrote a piece in the Fifth Reader about Belshazzar’s feast,” I started to remark, but I remembered in time to hush, for I’ve never been able to mention Lord Byron’s name to my family in any peace since they found that I keep a vase of flowers in front of his picture all the time. They call him my *beau*—the beautiful creature!

Father didn’t notice my remark, however. He

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was too busy with his own. "And instead of exchanging locks of hair, as they used to when Mary and I were young, they give each other limp-backed books that have 'helped to shape their career,' and beg that they will mark the passages that impress *them!*"

"Uncle Dan, you've been eavesdropping!" Cousin Eunice said, looking up from her hot biscuit and honey long enough to smile at him, but she didn't quit eating. It has got out of style to stop eating when you're in love, for a man admires a healthy-looking girl. I know a young man who had been going to see a girl for a long time and never did propose. She was a pretty girl, too, slender and wild-rosy-looking. Well, she took a trip to Germany one summer and drank so much of *something* fattening over there that the wild-rose look changed to American beauty; and when she came home in the fall the young man was so delighted with her looks that he turned in and married her before Christmas!

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Cousin Eunice knows these people too, and she does all she can to keep her digestion good, even to fresh milk and raw eggs. I hope *I* can get married without the raw eggs part of it. And she tramps all over the woods for the sake of her appetite in stylish-looking tan boots.

As we left the dining-room I noticed that she had on her walking-boots and a short skirt, so I thought Rufe would be along pretty soon for us to go down to the ravine and read poetry. They always take me along because I soon get enough of the poetry and go off to wade in the branch, leaving them on their favorite big gray rock.

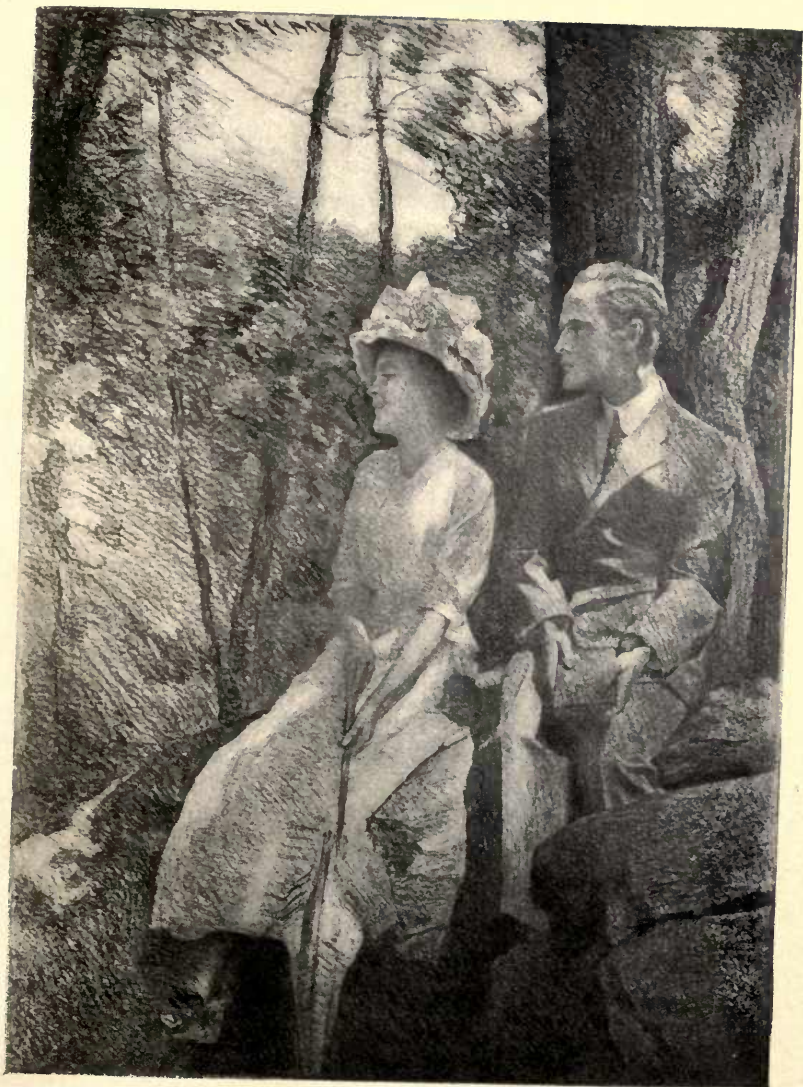
Sure enough, Rufe wasn't long about coming, and I saw that his limp-backed book was labeled "Keats" this morning. Cousin Eunice didn't have a book. She carried a parasol. A parasol is used to jab holes in the sand when you're being made love to.

I don't know why I should have felt so, but just as soon as they got started to reading this

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morning I had a curious feeling, like you have when the lights burn low on the stage and the orchestra begins *The Flower Song*. The way they looked at each other made under my scalp tingle. Now, if I ever have a granddaughter that doesn't have this feeling in the presence of *great* things I shall disinherit her and leave my diamonds to a society for tuberculosis or pure food or fresh air, or some of those charitable things.

Before long they branched off from Keats to Shelley, and Rufe didn't need a book with him. Just after he had finished a little verse beginning, "I can not give what men call love," I had sense enough to get up and go away from them. Although I have always been crazy to see a proposal, there was something in the atmosphere around that old gray rock that made me feel as if I were treading on sacred ground. (I hate to use expressions like this, that everybody else uses, but I can't think of anything else and it's getting too late to sit here by myself and try.)



Jabbing holes in the sand with her parasol *Page 26*

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Anyhow it's the feeling you have when you go into a cathedral with stained glass windows. So I went away from them, but not very far away, just a little distance, to where I have a lovely pile of moss collected on the north side of a big tree. And the smotheration around my heart kept up.

It seemed to me the *longest* time before anything happened, for Cousin Eunice was jabbing holes in the sand with her parasol like she was being paid to do it by the hour. Finally, without any ado, he put his hands on hers and made her stop.

"Sweetheart," I heard him say, so low that I could hardly hear, for *The Flower Song* was buzzing through my head so loud. Then he seemed to remember me for he looked around, and, seeing that I was *clear* gone, he said it again, "Sweetheart." She looked up at him when he said it, and looked and *looked!* Maybe she never had realized before just how big and broad-shouldered and brown-eyed Rufe really

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is! Neither one of them said anything, but he put both arms around her; and when I saw that they were going to kiss I shut my eyes right tight and stopped up my ears and buried my face in the pile of moss. Even then I never felt so much like a yellow dog in my life!

CHAPTER II

YOU hear a heap of talking these days about "the divine mission of woman," especially from long-haired preachers that don't believe in ladies voting; and another heap of talk about the "rights" of women from the ladies themselves.

There was so much of it going on last winter when I was at Rufe's that I told some of it to Mammy Lou when I came home. She says it's every speck a question of dish-washing when you sift it down to the bottom. The women are tired of their job and the men are too proud to do it unless the window shades are pulled down.

I don't blame the men for being proud. They have something to be proud of, for they can do exactly as they please, from wearing out the

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seats of their trousers when they're little to being president when they're big. When I was right little I used to think that the heathen over the sea that threw the girl babies to the crocodiles were doing it in hopes of killing out the girl breed, so the little new babies would have to be boys. A heathen is anybody that lives on the other side of the map from us.

Another good thing about a man is he can say, "Damn that telephone!" Rufe says it whenever he's busy and it bothers him, but Cousin Eunice can't. All she can do is to have sick headache when she gets worn out.

I know one tired lady whose husband is a busy doctor and whose baby is a busy baby, and lots of times the lady has to stop up her ears to say her prayers. And she hardly ever has time to powder her face unless company is coming, but, sick or well, she has to answer that telephone! She says it is a disheartening thing to have to take her hands out of the biscuit dough when the cook's brother has died and go to the tele-

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phone in a big hurry where folks tell her every symptom of everything they have, from abscess on the brain to ingrowing toe-nails. And she never gets the baby well lathered in his bath of a morning but what some of her lady friends call her up and she has to sit and talk for politeness' sake till the baby almost drowns and gets soap in his eyes.

She tries to believe in New Thought though, and some days she "goes into the silence." This means wrapping the telephone up in a counterpane and stuffing up the door-bell until it can make only a hoarse, choking noise. Then she spanks the baby and puts him to bed, and that house is like the palace of the Sleeping Beauty.

Yes, women certainly seem to have a hard time in this life. Even when they marry rich and live in a hotel and never have any babies they seem to be worse tired than the ones that warm bottles of milk and peel potatoes. Some of them that Cousin Eunice knows are called "bridge maniacs," and they shrug their

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shoulders and say "What's the use?" if you suggest anything to them.

I have been home from Cousin Eunice's now for two weeks, for the stylish, private school I went to up there lets out soon. Mammy Lou says I'm the worst person to break out in spots she ever saw, and one of my "spots" last summer was keeping this diary, which I did for a while very hard and fast. Now a whole year has passed and it is summer again and I am so lonesome that I believe I'll write a little every day and tell some of the things we did at Rufe's last winter. If any of you grandchildren who read are afflicted with that trouble of doing things by fits and starts you may know who you inherited it from. I'm not really to blame so much for neglecting you, my diary, for all the time I needed you most last winter you were lost. This is a terrible habit that all my things have—getting lost. My garters do it especially and I have to tear great holes in my

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stockings by pinning them up and then forgetting to stand stiff-kneed.

Rufe told mother last fall that I was so precocious, which I looked up in the dictionary and admired him very much for, that I ought to be where I could have good teachers. So after he and Cousin Eunice had been married long enough to be able to bear the sight of a third party at the breakfast table they wrote for me to come and I went.

I was kinder disappointed to see them looking like every-day folks again, for the last time I had seen them they were looking as they had never looked before and never will look again, for Rufe says he'll be hanged if anybody can get him to appear in that wedding suit any more.

But oh, that wedding! And oh, that wedding march played on a thundering pipe-organ that makes cold chills run up and down your back thinking what if it was happening to you! When the time comes for "I will" you nearly smother,

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you're so afraid they might change their minds at the last minute and embarrass you half to death right there before all those people.

They didn't change their minds then, though, nor since then either, I honestly believe. They married safe and sound, and Cousin Eunice's favorite book now is *1,001 Tried Recipes*. And Keats is lots of times covered with dust.

I got this far last night when Mammy Lou passed by my window on her way to her house from the kitchen and stopped long enough to make me go to bed. She says it takes a sight of sleep and a "passel o' victuals" for a girl of my age, and I don't have enough of either.

"I'se shore goin' 'er tell Mis' Mary how you set up uv a night," she said, very fiercely, but she couldn't shake her finger at me for it took both hands to hold the big pan she had under her apron. "An' as fer eatin'! Why, a red bug eats more! An' such truck! Candy and apples and fried chicken and fried Saratoga chips! *Fries* nuvver was no good for nobody

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at the gawky age, nohow. It takes *boils* to fatten them!"

I promised I'd go on to bed and eat nothing but "boils" to please her if she wouldn't tell father and mother how late I sit up, so she promised. She never would tell anyhow.

I believe the next thing I wanted to mention about was the theaters they used to take me to on Friday night when there wasn't any lessons. I just love the theater. I believe if I don't decide to be a trained nurse, although I am sure that is what I was cut out for, I may be an actress. When they used to tell me pitiful tales at Sunday-school about the heathen I was sure I wanted to be a missionary to Japan. Mother used to take me to a tea store with her every time we went into the city to buy things we couldn't get at home and the walls were covered with pictures of Japan. I never will forget how blue the sky was nor how white the clouds, and it seemed the loveliest country in the world to me, except home. And I would look at mother

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and wonder how she would feel if I told her that some day I was going to leave her and father and sail away to that beautiful land where the poor, ignorant people didn't know how to wear corsets nor eat hog meat. Of course they needed somebody to tell them what they were missing and I was eager to be that one!

That was a long time ago! I know more about Japan now! I know more about America too! Doctor Gordon said one night last winter that if some of the missionaries were to go all over this country and tell folks to open their windows and stop murdering their babies with candy and bananas they would do more good than trying to teach the Japanese so much. He said he didn't know which was the more heathenish, to throw children in the river and let them have a quick death or stuff them on fried meat and pickles and let them die by slow torture.

The mothers are hard to teach, he says, because they don't more than leave the doctor's office with a poor little pale baby than they meet

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an old woman who tells them not to let the child be doctored to death, to "feed 'im." They will tell the mother "Didn't *I* have eleven? And everything *I* et, *they* et!"

He told us so many stories of murdered babies that I got to feeling like I'd prefer being a nurse in a day home. I love babies! And Doctor Gordon has the loveliest eyes!—But I haven't got to him yet.

Speaking of the theater, I got to see many notorious people on the stage this winter. Rufe said I would get a great variety of ideas from the best plays. I did. I got a great variety of Ideals too. One time he would be tall, fair and brave, with a Scotch name, like Marmaduke Cameron, or Bruce MacPherson. Then the very next time I'd go he'd change his looks and disposition.

I loved some of the operas, too, especially *Il Trovatore*. I wish the singers were slender, though. It hurts your feelings to have the "voice that rang from that donjon tower" be-

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longing to a great fat man with no head to speak of, and what he has consisting mainly of jaws. Of all the songs on record (not phonographic record) next to *Dixie* and *La Paloma* I believe I love *Ah, I have sighed to rest me!* The words to this are not so loving, but the tune is so pitiful.

I wish my name was Dolores Lovelock, or Anita Messala, and I could get shut up in a tower. I have a girl friend in the city and every time we write to each other we sign the name we're wishing most was ours at that very minute. Her last letter was signed "Undine Valentine," but I don't think that's half as pretty as Mercedes Ficediola.

It wouldn't hardly be worth while for me to change my name now, because I change my mind so often. I'm a great hand to start a thing and then branch off and start something entirely different, such as learning how to make the table walk, and pyrography. Cousin Eunice said one day when she looked around at the things I had

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in my room that it reminded her of Pompeii when they dug it up—so many things started that never would be finished.

One of the things we enjoyed most at Cousin Eunice's was walking out to a lovely old cemetery not very far from her house. It is so old and so beautiful that you're sure all the people in the graves must have gone to Heaven long ago. Along in April, when the iris and lilies-of-the-valley are in bloom and the birds and trees and sky all seem to be so happy, you look around at those peaceful graves and you don't believe in hell one bit. You think God is a heap better than folks give Him credit for being. But I hope this will never come to Brother Sheffield's ears, for he thinks you're certainly going there if you don't believe in a hell worse than the Standard Oil Company on fire.

While I'm on this kind of subject I want to tell something that Rufe said last winter, but I'm afraid to, for if mother ever saw it she would get Brother Sheffield to hold a special meeting

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for Rufe. I might risk it and then lock my diary up tight. Rufe said one time when I remarked that I liked St. John better than St. Paul: "No wonder! St. John's *liver* was in good working order!"

Cousin Eunice and Rufe are still very earnest and study deep things, even if they don't read Keats so much. They know a jolly crowd of people that call themselves "Bohemians." Lots of nights some of them would come to Cousin Eunice's and we would cook things in the chafing-dish and "discuss the deeper problems of life." They are not real Bohemians though, for, from what they said, I learned that a real Bohemian is a person that is very clever, but nobody knows it. He "follows his career," eating out of paper sacks and tin cans and sleeping on an article that is an oriental couch in the daytime. Then finally some rich person finds him and invites him to dinner, and this is called "discovering a genius."

When our friends would come we would talk

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about the "Brotherhood of Man" and the North Pole and such things as that. I listen to everything I can hear about the North Pole for I never have got over the idea that Santa Claus lives there. And the "Brotherhood of Man" means we're all as much alike as biscuits in a pan, the only difference being in the place where we're put; and we ought to act accordingly.

Some of the young ones talk a great deal about how the children of the nation ought to be brought up, and they tell about what their family life is going to be like, though Rufe says most of them haven't got salary enough to support a cockroach.

I think the "Brotherhood of Man" business is a good thing to teach children, for I wasn't taught it and I shall never forget my feelings when I first learned that Christ was a Jew! I thought it couldn't be so, and if it was so I could never be happy again. So the Bohemians are going to teach their children that the Jew is our brother and that he hath eyes and if you

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prick him he will bleed. These are their own words. I'm sure the Jews are lovely people since I've seen Ben-Hur on the stage and the picture of Dis—Disraeli. That's all I know about him and I'm not sure how to spell that. I'll skiu my children if I ever catch them saying "Sheenie" in my presence.

And we make limericks! We don't make them in the chafing-dish though, as I thought when I first went there. A limerick is a very different thing from what you'd think if you didn't know. It's a verse of poetry that's very clever in every line.

Among the Bohemians I liked best were a married couple and Ann Lisbeth. Besides having the same name as mine, Ann Lisbeth is a beautiful foreign girl who was living across the ocean when she was born. Her last name is something that *Disraeli* is not a circumstance to, and I'd never spell it, so I won't waste time trying. She's going to get rid of that name pretty soon and I don't blame her, although Cousin

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Eunice says it is a noble one across the ocean. *Still* I don't blame her, for the man is a young doctor, Doctor Gordon that I've already mentioned, and perfectly *precious*. Next to a prince I believe a young doctor is the most thrilling thing in the world!

Ann Lisbeth lived near Cousin Eunice and they were great friends. She and her mother were very poor because they got exiled from their home for trying to get Ann Lisbeth's father out of prison where the king had put him. Oh, the people across the ocean are so much more romantic than we are in this country! Now, father wouldn't ever get put in prison in a lifetime!

Ann Lisbeth has to work for a living. She does embroidery—exquisite embroidery, and lace work that looks like charlotte russe. She is the kind of looking girl that you'd expect to have a dressing-table covered with silver things and eat marshmallows and ice-cream all the time. She is what Cousin Eunice calls a "lotus-

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eater." This like to have worried me to death at first, for I misunderstood it and imagined it was something like eating roaches. I wasn't going to blame Ann Lisbeth for it even if it *was* like roaches, for I thought maybe it was the style in her country across the ocean. What is *one* nation's style would turn another's stomach; and everybody likes what he was raised on, even Chinese rats and Limburger cheese.

It was very romantic the way Ann Lisbeth met Doctor Gordon. She had gone down to the florist's one slippery day to spend her last quarter for white hyacinths to cheer her mother up when she had the good fortune to slip down and break her arm. Doctor Gordon happened to be passing at the time in his automobile and he carried her to the hospital and fixed the arm. He said white hyacinths were his favorite flower, too, so he sends them to her and her mother every day.

Poor Doctor Gordon! He's having a hard time to make a living like every other young

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doctor. He says sometimes he has a whole month of blue Mondays come right together. And he says every time he happens to wake up with a headache he also has a blowout in his best tire and gets a notice from the bank that he's overdrawn the same day.

I liked him extremely well myself for a while, and he seemed to like me. He called me his little sweetheart, but I soon saw that a little sweetheart has to take a big back seat when there's a grown one around.

Mother and I have been laughing all day about a little affair that happened here last winter while I was away at school.

After Christmas mother and father went back to stay at Rufe's with me a few days, for they said the place was so lonesome when I left they couldn't stand it. Of course they met Doctor Gordon and Ann Lisbeth, for we were always at each other's house, either to learn a Mount Mellick stitch or to play a piece from a new opera. Mother liked Ann Lisbeth's sweet ways.

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so much that she said she just must come down and make her a visit before she *thought* of getting married.

About the time for the first jonquils to bloom, early in February, mother wrote that they reminded her so much of me and made her so lonesome, that she wished Ann Lisbeth would come on then. So she packed her suit-case and went.

Everybody knows how the people in a little place will look at a stranger that comes in, because they're so tired of looking at each other. So they stared at her from the station clear up to the house. Now, city people never get any enjoyment out of staring unless they see somebody in trouble, such as an unfortunate young man with his shoulder to the wheel, trying to repair a puncture, by the side of a muddy road. Then they stare, and giggle too.

There were several young men at the station that day, and, as Ann Lisbeth went down there not breathing to a soul that she was engaged,

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they came near losing their minds over her beautiful skin and foreign accent.

The one of them that seemed to be most impressed was a bore—no, he wasn't just an everyday kind of bore that asks you if this is your first visit to that place and tells you afterward that he never has been so impressed in his life on short acquaintance. I've heard Cousin Eunice talk about them, but this man wasn't like that sort of bore. He was a perfect *auger*. Many a time when he has dropped in to see father of an evening and I would have to put my book down for politeness' sake, I've sat there and pinched my face, the side that was turned away from him, till it was black and blue, to keep awake. Pinching your arm or leg wouldn't have done any good with this man—you had to pinch up close to your brain.

All the time Ann Lisbeth was there he showed so plainly that he was coming to see *her* that mother and father would go out and leave them alone, though father said he felt so sorry for

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her that he promised always to do something to run him off by ten o'clock. Every man knows how to do these things, I believe, such as taking off his shoes loud and telling mother to wind the clock, in a stagey voice, and making a great racket around the front door. And when the young man would hear these signs he would leave.

Right in the midst of Ann Lisbeth's visit one day she got a telegram from Doctor Gordon saying that he was coming down that evening and leave on the midnight train. This is a sure sign a man cares. He couldn't stand it any longer. Well this Mr. W. (I'll call him that for fear his grandchildren might feel hard toward mine if it ever got to their ears that I had spelt his name right out) had said he was coming over that night to bring some new records for the talking machine, to try them; but, when Ann Lisbeth told mother about Doctor Gordon coming, mother telephoned him, Mr. W., I mean, not to come till the next night when father

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would be at home, as he wanted to hear the records.

Sure enough father did have some business out in the country that afternoon and didn't get home until about ten o'clock that night. He heard voices as he passed the parlor door, and thinking of course it was Mr. W., decided that he would run him off right away so poor Ann Lisbeth could get some sleep.

Mother was already asleep and there was no way for him to know who it really was in the parlor, so he took his shoes off and slammed them down in vain, and rattled out the ashes, and wound the clock, and coughed and sneezed. By this time he was awfully sleepy, for it was a cold night and he had had a long drive, so he went to bed and to sleep.

Along about twelve o'clock father woke up, and seeing a light still in the parlor, tried to get mother roused up long enough to ask her what else she supposed he might use besides *dynamite* to run that fellow off. Mother was still so sleepy

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that she didn't say anything, so father got out of bed and opened his bedroom door. There were voices talking very easy in the parlor, so father, thinking that surely Ann Lisbeth would be ready to commit suicide by this time, decided he would walk to the front door and open and shut it real loud, knowing *that* would run him off, without waiting to slip on his trousers.

Now, father is long and lank, and wears old-timey bob-tail night-shirts, winter and summer; and all the rooms of our house open *square* into that one big hall—and there are no curtains to hide behind!

Just as father reached the front door and began tampering with the lock, out walked the happy pair from the parlor and they must have had a mighty tumble off of Mount Olympus or Pegasus, or whatever that place is called. They jumped back as quickly as they could, but of course they couldn't get back quickly enough to suit all parties concerned.

Father finally got the door open and, to keep

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from having to pass the parlor door again, he ran *clear* around that big, rambling house, bare-footed, and with the February moon shining down on him and the February wind whistling through his little bob-tail night-shirt.

The noise of so many doors opening and shutting made mother wake up in a hurry, and, being used to father's ways of leaping, then looking afterward, she realized what had happened.

Poor father came around to the side porch and scratched on the bedroom door for mother to let him in. By this time she was so near dead from laughing that she could hardly speak, but managed to use her voice a little, just to pay him back for doing such an idiotic thing, she said.

She opened the bedroom door a little, so Doctor Gordon and Ann Lisbeth could hear, then called out in a loud, distressed voice:

“Oh, Dan! *Have* you come home in *that condition* again?”

Everybody that knows father knows that he

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never drank a drop of anything stronger than soothing-syrup in his life; and when he had met Doctor Gordon in the city they hadn't been able to get off the subject of prohibition, they both were so temperate. It was a terrible thing to be called "in that condition" before *him!*

But mother let him in, and Doctor Gordon caught his train back to the city where he sent father at least *two* dozen funny post-cards on the subject of "that condition."

CHAPTER III

I ALWAYS did admire surprises, my diary, so when mother came in from the station one day not long ago and said there was a surprise for me I thought sure it must be a dessert for dinner, or a package come by express, as it isn't Christmas for anything to be in the toe of my stocking. But mother shook her head and smiled at all of these. She said it was a heap better, and it is.

A curious thing has happened in this family. It's happened a little to father, for he's kept awake by it; a good deal to mother, for she has to tell how to tend to it; an awful lot to Dilsey, for she has to walk it and feed it and get it to sleep; but it has happened most of all to Bertha, for it's to *her* that the stork (or the doctor, or

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out of the rose bush—they tell you so many different tales you never know which to believe) brought it. Just about that time Bertha happened not to be feeling very well, so mother wrote for her to come down to our house where the air would be good for her, and then she would have Dilsey to tend to it. You'd never guess what it is, my diary, so I'll tell you. It's a baby! A live one with open and shut eyes, and can cry; you don't have to pull a string to make it, either. This makes it better than even the finest doll, and, as I'm above dolls anyhow, a baby is more suitable to one of my age. The only bad part about it is that you can't lock it up in the wardrobe when you get through playing with it. Sometimes I have wished it was the kind you had to pull a string to make cry, and then I'd cut the string off so we would have a few peaceful nights, but apt as not this wouldn't be healthy for it, for I guess the stork (or the doctor, or out of the rose bush) knew best how to fix it.

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Mr. Parkes is the baby's father, and also Bertha's husband. He is one of the nicest men you ever saw, pleasant all the time, which people say is because he's a drummer which sells things. He carries valises full of lovely crackers and little cakes with icing on the top, and calls it his "line." I've heard Rufe and Cousin Eunice talk about "lines falling in pleasant places," and I think it must mean something like this, for our house has been a pleasant place since Saturday night when he came to spend Sunday with us and Bertha. Some days he sells as much as five hundred dollars worth of cake to *one* man, though I don't see what keeps him from *dying* that bought them of stomach ache, for I've had it myself since he's been here considerable. He and father talk a heap about Mr. Parkes' "house" in the city. He writes to the house every day and it writes back to him, and he is always saying what he'll do "when he hears from the house," just like it was folks.

He wears an elk's head on the lapel of his coat

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for an ornament and another on his watch chain, and even has a pair of purple socks with white elks on them, and laughs a good deal, which has been a benefit to Bertha's disposition since she married him. If the baby wakes up and cries for her bottle as late as *eleven* o'clock at night, which would give most men room to say things, he's just as jolly as if it was broad daylight, and says so loud you can hear him in the next room: "Tonsound her little skin! Her is her daddy's own kid—*her* knows that eleven o'clock calls for a bottle, only daddy wants *his* cold, and her wants *hers* warmed!" And out to the kitchen he goes and warms it like a gentleman. I believe Mr. Parkes would be a gentleman even if he had *twins*.

Of course there never is any good happens to your family without something bad happening along with it. A misfortune was sent to us one morning when the train came. It was Aunt Laura, mother's sister, and Bertha's and my aunt. It is a habit of hers to come to our house

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every summer, but this time she came before we were looking for her, having got mad at the relatives where she was. So she has changed her will and is going to leave all her money to Bertha's baby, and she told mother that she came right on down as soon as she decided on this to see if the baby was a nice, well-behaved child, as it didn't run in the family for the children to be any too well-behaved; and she looked at me when she said the last. Bertha was in a flutter when she heard it, but mother just laughed and said the baby was equally as well-behaved as most eight-weeks-old children.

Aunt Laura has spit-curls, but a great deal of money, having been a school teacher ever since she was born, and never spending her money buying her little nieces candy and pretty dresses. She admires church and preachers more than anything, but I don't, and when the money was willed to *me* one time I lost my chance by saying at the table when Brother Sheffield was there eating chicken and said he liked the gizzard,

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right quick, before I thought of manners, "Father, don't give it to him—*he ain't little!*" The money has been willed to every member of the family, for she gets mad at one and unwill it away from them onto another, until we've all had a trial.

But the poetry books say it's a black cloud that don't blow somebody a silver lining, and I guess the silver lining to Aunt Laura is that she's in love with Brother Sheffield, which will give me a good many new thoughts to write about; for before when I was writing about couples it was always the man that was trying to marry the lady, but now it's the other way, which you can always count on when you see spit-curls. Even this is better to write about than just a baby, though, for they mostly do the same thing day after day; but you can never tell what a *loving* person will do to thrill your diary.

It was till plumb breakfast time this morning before Aunt Laura made known to us what new

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thing she's got up to talk about all the time. Father calls it a "fad." He said the minute he saw her come he was willing to bet on anything, from the latest breakfast food to an Auntie Saloon League, but mother told him it was sinful to bet about such things, for last summer it was foreign missions. It is just as well that he didn't bet, for he would have lost, it being the heart disease which she has very bad. She said she didn't tell us right at first because she knew we didn't care anything about hearing it, but she thought we better be prepared in case a spell came on her suddenly, for she had felt worse symptoms lately than ever before. Bertha had acted awful good all day and not let the baby cry nor slobber on Aunt Laura for the sake of the will.

I guess I've been worse this last week than ever before, for it is the first time I've been ashamed to tell what I've done in my diary. Bertha knows if Aunt Laura could get Brother Sheffield to marry her she would unwill the

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money from the baby ; so she thinks up things to tell me to do to keep them from being together, and I've been doing them. One time I hid her purple Sunday bonnet, then her curls to keep her from going to prayer-meeting, but I'm glad to say that I have never taken the dimes which Bertha said she would give me for doing them. I hate Aunt Laura enough to do mean things to her myself, which is a better principle than to do them just for dimes.

This is Sunday again and I have to go to church. Somehow, during the summer, Sunday smells like black silk, for mother and all the ladies that can afford it wear it to church to let the others see how well off they are. When I was *right* little and got tee-ninsy cards at Sunday-school I imagined Heaven looked like those cards, all lilies-of-the-valley and little pink lambs, but since I've grown older my views have changed. Preachers always think you can't go to Heaven unless you do just like they do, and I

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couldn't be like a preacher to save my life, except about chicken.

Aunt Laura had to look all over the place for her black silk waist this morning and then not find it, so she got into a bad spell and couldn't go to church. After the sermon was over and we were trying to forget it by standing around and telling the other ladies how much fruit we had put up this past week, Brother Sheffield came up and asked mother if Aunt Laura was sick, not being out to services. Mother said she was, but she hoped to find her all right when we got home, as she never was sick very long, and I knew she would be well because it was ice-cream for dinner. He said then he'd be over to see her this afternoon as he hadn't seen her in so long.

Well, it was awfully hot all the afternoon, and, as he wouldn't be over till late so as to be invited to supper, Aunt Laura decided to take off her front hair and have a nap after dinner. Now, up to this time I have been afraid to men-

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tion even in my diary about Bertha's bad habit. I really like Bertha better than I did before she was married, and I knew if Aunt Laura was to catch on to it she would change from the baby right away, for Brother Sheffield calls it "the trade-mark of Jezebel," which is a Bible lady, though the preachers always throw her up to anybody they don't like. So Bertha keeps this locked away good in the little left-handed drawer of her bureau, and don't anybody but me know it's there.

It was getting late when brother Sheffield drove up to the gate. He is an old man and his knees are so poor that they look like they would punch through his trousers legs if he was to get down on them to ask a lady to marry him, as they do in books. In fact, I have stayed around the parlor and watched considerable, thinking how mortified I'd feel if they were to punch through, but he hasn't ever got down on them yet. His name is Gideon, which makes it worse for him, too. Cousin Eunice said Ann Lisbeth's

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name is a very old one in the country across the ocean where she used to live, but I know there ain't an older name on earth than Gideon. Aunt Laura ought to have been named the feminine of it, instead of that beautiful name that has so much lovely poetry written about it.

Anyhow, I was surprised that she wasn't dressed up in a clean waist and down on the front porch to meet him, but I went up-stairs right quick to tell her he was there. She was still asleep and woke up as mad and red as folks always do that go to sleep in the summer. I told her he was already on the porch.

“Well, help me get dressed, won't you, instead of standing there staring at me as if you never saw anybody with their front hair off and their upper plate out before? Run to the well and bring me some fresh water, and, say, come back by your mother's room and bring me her box of powder and puff. I spilt all of mine looking in the drawer this morning for that pestiferous waist. Hurry!”

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I ran to the well and got the water, but coming back by mother's room I saw that Brother Sheffield was facing the door and would have seen me, which wouldn't have been nice to bring out a box and puff before a man, much less a preacher, so I didn't get the powder. I told Aunt Laura to get Bertha's, when she commenced fussing, for I had passed her room and saw that she had dressed in a big hurry and left the bureau unlocked, the room being very hot and dark, the baby being asleep, on account of the flies. She hushed then and said for me to go down and tell him that she would be out in a few minutes, which I did. I left him on the porch fanning while I went out to a little place I have under the porch where it is nice and quiet and they can't find you reading fairy tales when they want you for something; but *you* can hear *them* talking.

Pretty soon Aunt Laura came out, and in her dressed-up voice commenced telling him how sorry she was that she kept him waiting. But

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before she had more than got it said he asked her excited-like what was the matter with her. It seemed like when he got excited she did too, so she grabbed her stomach (not that I saw her, but I know she always does it here lately when she gets mad or scared) and said:

“Oh, my heart! It must be the heart disease!”

He interrupted her again, a heap too quick and sharp for a preacher:

“Your heart *nothing!* Go and look at your *face!*”

That was more than I could stand, so out from under the porch I slid, just in time to see Aunt Laura, with her face as red as the Indians they have in sideshows, turn and run into the hall where she could look at herself in the hat-rack looking-glass. She gave one tremendous yell which woke the baby and made the rest of the family come flying in from where they were. It wasn't a minute before me and Brother Sheffield were in the hall with her and mother and father running in off of the back porch,

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and Dilsey with the baby in her arms leaning over the banisters to see what was the matter.

“It’s my death stroke,” Aunt Laura said, just like she knew what she was talking about. “The doctor’s books say it comes on this way,” she kept on, while the preacher fanned her and we were all flying around doing things for her, and me standing still wondering how on earth come her face so fiery red. “Thank Heaven, I die in the conviction of having lived a good life, *and* willed all my money to the only member of my family that has ever treated me with any respect.” This did look kinder like the truth, for the baby was the only member of the family which was crying over this sad occasion; but she was very loud and hard.

“I’ve been visited by Providence with a curious family,” poor Aunt Laura said, looking very mad toward father and mother, “but they will soon have cause to regret all their strange ways with me. If there was *one* person in this world that *did* care for me, to *that* one should my will

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be changed, for there is little consolation in leaving your property to a baby."

Brother Sheffield here spoke up and said as Aunt Laura "so fully realized her hopeless condition he thought they better have some conversation together as to her spiritual welfare. He desired a few moments alone with her."

"Yes," said Aunt Laura right quick, "*private* conversation. My soul's safety is not to be discussed in the presence of my enemies!"

So out we all got, me along with the rest of them, which was a great disappointment, for I could have learned a good deal if there had been any way of staying in there. They talked a long time and we could hear a few remarks now and then, being as we couldn't think of anything to say ourselves, and it was very still on the porch. Once or twice we heard her say very decided-like that indeed she *wasn't* mistaken, for every book she had read on the subject said it was exactly that kind of a symptom. And then he would talk some, and one time he seemed to doubt her

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word so that she fairly yelled out, the way she does when he ain't around: "Can you doubt the hideous mark of death that has this hour appeared upon my face? Isn't it proof that my flesh is being prepared for the worms?" which *did* sound pitiful and scary, too, it being kinder dark on the porch. This seemed to do the work, for in a few minutes she called us in and told us that Brother Sheffield had asked her to marry him, and although she had never before considered him in the light of a lover, still she was going to do it if the Lord let her live an hour, while father could ride over for a preacher and she could change her will. Brother Sheffield was crying like he does when he is calling mourners, and his voice would hardly talk, but he managed to say:

"Yes, she has done me the honor to accept me; she, a woman of intellect and *wealth*, and me, only a poor, humble worker——" He couldn't get any further, but I had heard it so many times before that I knew it was "humble worker

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of the vineyard," though father says he is more of a *hungry* eater of the *barnyard*.

When Aunt Laura mentioned about being married in an hour Brother Sheffield seemed to take a second thought, and spoke up kinder weak and said he didn't know whether it was exactly right to be married on Sunday or not. When Aunt Laura saw him begin to weaken it brought on such a hard spell that she laid back on the sofa with her eyes shut, like she was sure enough dead. This really scared mother, and she told Mammy Lou, who had her head poked in at the back door, to run for some water. Mammy brought the bucket in off the back porch and commenced sousing it over Aunt Laura by the handful, which didn't bring her to; but a strange thing happened, which, if it wasn't me that saw it, anybody would think it was a story, but I cross my heart that the water that dribbled down off her face on to her clean waist was *pink!*

"Jumping Jerusalem!" father said, "the heart

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disease is washing off!" This made Aunt Laura open her eyes, and by that time Mammy Lou had got a towel and was wiping her face off all over, which seemed to make it look natural again. Not one of us knew what to think of such a strange disease till all of a sudden I remembered Bertha's bad habit! And then I knew it was all off with Aunt Laura and the marrying. It wasn't very long till they all caught on to what it was on her face; and the worst part of it was that Brother Sheffield said he believed she did it *a-purpose*. He rose up very proud, and looking kinder relieved and said he could never marry a woman who would "defile herself with the trade-mark of Jezebel."

When he commenced throwing up Jezebel to Aunt Laura she threw up Esau to him, which sold himself for a "mess of pottage," though this never did sound lady-like to me, even coming from the pulpit. So Esau went out and drove straight home, and Jezebel went up-stairs and packed her trunk to go home early in the

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morning, never having been so insulted by relatives before in her life.

So the marrying is off and the baby is disinherited, which will be a relief to it when it gets big enough to understand. But the worst part is that Aunt Laura blames the whole thing on me, for she says I had her ruination in mind when I sicked her on to that little left-handed drawer. Of course it ain't so, but it proves that people ought to raise the blind and be sure it's *whitening* they're spreading on, even if the baby is asleep.

CHAPTER IV

YOU remember, my diary, a good many pages back I mentioned in here a pair of Bohemians that were married to each other and were friends of ours and would come to Rufe's every week and we would all do funny things? Well, I couldn't write about them then, for I didn't have any space for married people, wanting to save it purely for folks that loved each other. But now it does seem like Providence that they've come down here to spend the summer in the country, for there's not a single loving soul left to write about, Aunt Laura being gone and Brother Sheffield never very loving when she was here, except chicken.

Their name is Mrs. Marie and Augustus Young. Father says that Adam or the legisla-

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ture knew a thing or two when it named them *Young*. He is a professor and owns a chair in a college that must either have gold nails in it or sit extra good, for Rufe says it is worth five thousand dollars a year. Mrs. Young sings vocal. I wish she didn't, especially in a parlor. If anybody is singing or reciting a speech on a platform and flowers and electric lights it thrills you and you really enjoy it; but if they do it in a close room, especially if it trills high or has to kneel down and get red in the face, it makes you so ashamed for the one that's doing it, and for yourself, too, that you look straight at the carpet. Even then the blood rushes to your head.

They have built a house with such a wide porch running all around it that it reminds you of a little, tiny boy with a great big hat pulled down over his eyes, which is called a bungalow. They said they had brought a "complete outfit for light housekeeping" along with them, but when mother saw it she laughed considerable on

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the outside of the bungalow, for it was fifty-three books, mostly ending in "ology," a hammock and some chairs that lean away back, a guitar apiece, a great many little glass cases that you stick bugs and butterflies in if you can catch them, a picture of the Apostle Hosea, with his head all wrapped up like an old lady with the neuralgia, which they both said they could not live without, and a punching-bag, which they punched a great deal in the city, not having any baby to amuse themselves with, which was a good thing for the baby I reckon. So mother sent them over a great many things and Professor Young said she was the most sensible woman he ever saw, including a biscuit board and a sifter. They have been here a few days now and are delighted with the country air and the green scenery, and, although it does seem proud to say it, *me*. They thought very highly of me at Cousin Eunice's and said I was the most "interesting revelation of artless juvenile expression" they ever saw, which I wrote

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down on paper and when I came home taught it to Mammy Lou to give in at the experience meeting.

One morning early, while mammy was beating the biscuit for breakfast, and I was up in the pear tree right by the kitchen door I nearly fell out with surprise when I saw Professor Young coming around the house with a pretty shirt open at the neck that he admires and two *great big* dominecker roosters up in his arms which were both squawking very loud. Mammy Lou came to the door to see what all the noise was about, and he said she was the very person he wanted to see.

“Auntie,” he commenced, trying to get into his pocket and wipe his face with his handkerchief, which was greatly perspiring, but he couldn’t do it for the roosters, “my wife and I are in a quandary. We are both ignorant of the preferred method of inflicting a painless yet instantaneous death upon a fowl.”

Mammy’s eyes began to shine, for she loves

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big words like she loves watermelons, and without a sign of manners she never even tried to answer his question, but looked up at me in the tree and says:

“Baby, kin you rickollect all that to write it down?”

Professor Young then looked up into the tree too and says: “Why, Mistress Ann, how entirely characteristic!” And then he wanted to know what book I was reading and I told him, *John Halifax, Gentleman*, which I have had for my favorite book since I was eleven years old; and the roosters continued to squawk. I got down then and asked Professor Young if he wouldn’t come into the house, but he said no and asked his question to mammy over again. She looked at me and to save her manners I told her right quick what the meaning of it was, me understanding it on account of being precocious and also at Rufe’s last winter, where they use strange words.

“*Thar now!* Is *that* all it’s about?” she

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asked awfully disappointed, for she thought from the words "painless death" it must be something about preaching. Then in a minute, when she saw that he was still waiting, she turned around to him and said: "Whar is the chicken *at* that you want killed?"

He held the roosters away from him and, looking at them as proud as a little boy looks at a bucket of minnows, he said:

"These are they!"

This tickled mammy so, and me too, though I remembered my manners, that she began to laugh, which shook considerable under her apron, and said:

"Well, gentlemen! Whut do you want to kill *them* for?"

"For breakfast," he said; and, noticing her laughing, his face got to looking so pitiful all in a minute that it made me just wish that Cinderella's fairy godmother would come along and turn those roosters into nice little pullets all fried and laying on parsley.

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“Why, Mr. Professor,” mammy told him, “them roosters is so old that they will soon die a natural death if you leave them alone; and they’re so big that you might fry ’em frum now till breakfast time on Judgment Day, and then they wouldn’t be fitten!”

When she told him this he did manage to get out his handkerchief, I thought maybe to cry on, he looked so disappointed, but it was just to perspire on.

“I—er, observed that they were unduly large,” the poor man told her, “but I—er, thought maybe the larger a country thing was the better!”

I thought of horse-flies and ticks, but was too mannerly to mention them, especially so near breakfast time. Just then mother and father came out of the back door, and when they heard the tale of the roosters they both invited him to come right in and have breakfast with us, and said they would tie their legs together so they could flop around the back yard, but couldn’t

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get away, and I could run over and bring Mrs. Young.

Last night when I got home I was too tired to write or anything else, for it was the night of the glorious Fourth! Professor Young and Mrs. Young both kept remarking all day how lovely it was to be able to spend the Fourth of July in a cool ravine instead of in the horrid city where there were so many smells of gunpowder and little boys. They said they must have me go along for the woods wouldn't really be woody without me, as I was the genius loci. I didn't know at first what that was, but I know now that it makes you tired and perspire to be the genius loci of eight miles of woods on the Fourth of July. Rufe and Cousin Eunice couldn't think of half as many peculiar things to do when they were courting as the Youngs.

We ate a number of stuffed eggs which kinder made up for the tiredness, me being very fond of them, but Professor Young is crazy

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about Mrs. Young's singing voice and every time we'd come to an extra pretty place he would say: "Marie, my love, sing something just here," so we'd have to stand still on our legs, it often being too snaky to sit down, while she sang. One time she thought up part of a song without a speck of tune to it, and it was in a language across the ocean. All I could make out was "Parsifal," and every once in a while she would stop a minute in the song and say a word that sounded like "Itch," though I don't suppose it was, being in a song. Every time she would say itch he would scratch, for the poor man was covered with ticks.

But the most trying thing was the bugs and butterflies, which being "naturalists" they caught. We had to run all over the ground and sides of the hills for them, and empty our dinner out on a nice, shady rock, so we could use the lunch box to put them in. When we got back we found it all covered with ants, but we were so hungry we thought we'd brushed

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them all off, though in the cake we found we *hadn't*. If a person hasn't ever eaten an ant, my diary, there ain't any use in trying to make them understand what they taste like, so I won't dwell on that. Professor Young said though he was willing to eat them for the sake of his beloved science, though I don't see how it helped science any.

Toward evening we got to a fine place in the branch to wade and Mrs. Young said, oh, let's do it; it would remind us of our childhood days. So we soon had our feet bare, with our thoughts on our childhood days, and never once stopping to remember that we didn't have a thing to wipe them on. Nobody said so much as towel until we got out, and then it was too late, so we were very much pained and annoyed every step of the way home on account of our gritty feet.

Another morning early we decided to go out and see the sun rise, like Thoreau. (They tell me how to spell all the odd words.) We went up to the tiptop of a high hill, and when the sun

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was just high enough to make you squint your eyes Mr. Young remarked that he realized his life was "replete with glorious possibilities," and he said in such moments he felt that he could "encompass his heart's desire." He said he fain would be a novelist. Now, this is the only subject they ever fall out about, for he's always wanting to be something that he is not. Last winter when he met Doctor Gordon at Rufe's he decided he wanted to be a doctor, for he said they could always make a living, no matter where they were, while a poor college professor had to stay wherever he had a chair to sit in. So he went to a store where you buy rubber arms and legs and things and bought a long black bag like Doctor Gordon's, full of shiny, scary-looking scissors and knives which cost seventy-five dollars, to lay away till fall when the doctor's school opened up again. In two weeks Mrs. Young had got the store man to take the things back for half price because Professor Young had decided he wanted to study banjo

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playing instead of doctoring and had bought a banjo trimmed with silver.

She knew whenever he said he wanted to *be* anything it would cost as much as two new dresses, and then have to be exchanged for something else, so she asked him if he would have to buy anything to begin this novel-writing business with. He proudly told her no, for his "Mother Nature had endowed him with a complete equipment," and he thumped his forehead between his eyes and his straw hat. Then she told him to go on. He said it would be a good time to get material from the study of the "primitive creatures" around here in the country.

I hoped these "primitive creatures" were not the kind of insects you would have to empty the lunch box for, nor be careful not to pull off their hind legs while you were catching them, not knowing just what they were.

I was scared good when he said he thought the girl that milked Mrs. Hedges' cows would

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be a good one to begin on. He said if Marie didn't mind he would go over to the *farthest* pasture where he could see her then *and draw her out to see what was in her!* This sounded terrible to me, knowing that he used some sickly smelling stuff on the bugs that killed ~~them~~ before they had time to say a word, and I thought maybe because Emma Belle was a poor servant girl he was going to do her the same way.

He had always seemed such a kind-hearted man to me, and I saw him and Emma Belle standing at the fence talking and he ~~was~~ not trying to hold anything to her nose, still I didn't feel easy till he got back. Mrs. Young asked him what he had learned, and if his novel would be along "socialistic lines" or a "romance in a simple bucolic setting." That "bucolic" reminded me of Bertha's little innocent baby, and I wished I was at home nursing it even if it did cry, rather than be out sun-rising with such a peculiar man. He said it would be a "pastoral," and that the girl's eyes were exact-

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ly like his first sweetheart's, which was remarkable. Mrs. Young spoke up right quick and said there wasn't anything remarkable in *that*, because all common, country girls looked alike and they all had about as much expression as a squash.

We haven't been out early acting like Thoreau any more, for Mrs. Young said it was the most foolish of all the foolish things Augustus had made her do, and he could continue to associate with milkmaids by himself if he wanted to, which he has. This morning she came over to our house early to ask mother if you singed a picked chicken over a blaze or what, and if she didn't think Thoreau was an idiot. Mother said yes, you did, if it had pin feathers on it, and she didn't know much about Thoreau, but she preferred men that paid taxes and ate off of white tablecloths. Mrs. Young said she thought all men that read bugology and admired pictures like Hosea were a little idiotic and she wished she had married a man like father.

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Mother said well, she better not be too sure, for they all have their faults.

After a good long time Professor Young came in, not finding Marie at the bungalow, looking awful hot and cross. The sight of him seemed to make Mrs. Young feel worse than ever and she told him she had just come over to consult mother about her journey home tomorrow, although she hadn't mentioned it to us before. She went on to say that *he* might spend the rest of the summer, or the rest of his life if he wanted to, boarding over at Mrs. Hedges' where he could see Emma Belle morning, noon and night, instead of only in the morning. He said why, he was utterly surprised for she hadn't mentioned such a thing to him before, but she told him he hadn't spent enough time with *her* lately even to know whether or not she still retained the power of speech. He said right quick, oh, he never doubted *that!* She said, well, *she* was going and he needn't argue with *her*. He said he wasn't going to argue, he was only

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too glad to leave such a blasted place, for he wanted material for his novel, but the farmer's girl he had talked with the *first* morning, and the *plow-boys* he had been associating with ever since were all such fools he couldn't get any material from them.

The minute he said that she seemed to feel better and change her mind. She said Augustus ought to be ashamed to talk that way about poor ignorant things which never had any opportunities! He said he wanted to go back to the city anyway where there was a bath-tub, but she told him he was very foolish to think about leaving such a cool, "Arcadian" spot; their friends would all laugh at them for coming back so soon. She said she had merely mentioned going back for *his* pleasure, for all the world knew how she *loved* the country. He finally said he loved it too, so they would stay, but he would be forced to give up novel-writing because the country people around here are all fools.

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I've heard Professor Young talk about sitting in a college chair being a hard life, and Doctor Gordon says doctoring is a hard life, and Rufe says that editing is a hard life, but, my diary, between you and me, from the looks of things this morning, I kinder believe that marrying is a hard life, too.

CHAPTER V

D ID you ever think what a dear old thing anybody's black mammy is, my diary, especially when she's done all the cooking (and raised you) for twenty-five years? Mammy Lou has belonged to us just like father and mother ever since we've been at housekeeping, and my heart almost breaks to-night when I think of the fire in our stove that won't burn and the dasher in our churn that is still. Ever since I've been keeping a diary I've been awfully glad to hear about anybody being in love, and took great pleasure in watching them and writing it all out, for I could *always* imagine it was *me* that was the lady. But I would rather never keep a diary another day than to have such a thing happen to Mammy Lou.

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When mother heard about it she said not to be an old fool, but Mammy Lou said, "either Marse Shakespeare or Marse Solomon said a old fool was the biggest fool and she wasn't going to make him out no lie. So marry that Yankee nigger she was!"

Bill Williams first came here to teach school, being very proud and educated. Then he got to be Dilsey's beau and they expected to marry. When he first commenced going to see Dilsey Mammy Lou would cook the nicest kind of things for her to take to picnics, hoping to help her catch him in a motherly way. But when he started to promising to give Dilsey a rocking-chair and take her to "George Washington" if she would marry him, Mammy Lou changed about. She had always wanted to see a large city *herself*, and she thought it wasn't any use of letting Dilsey get all the best things in life, even if she was her child.

Pretty soon she commenced wearing red ribbon around her neck and having her hair wrap-

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ped fresh once a week. Then she told him *she* was the good cook that cooked all the picnic things, and ironed all of Dilsey's clean dresses; also that she had seventy-five dollars saved up that she would be willing to spend on a grand bridal trip the next time she got married. Mammy Lou is a smart old thing, and so she talked to him until he said, well, he would just as soon marry her as Dilsey, if she would stop cooking for us, and cook for *him* and iron *his* shirts all the time. She promised him she would do this, like people always do when they're trying to marry a person, although it looks very different afterward. None of mammy's other husbands had been so proud. *They* would not only let her cook, but would come around every meal time, in the friendliest kind of way, and help her draw a bucket of water. This is why the whole family's heart is breaking and we feel so hungry to-night. She's quit, and the wedding is to-morrow.

This morning early she came up to the house

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to ask mother if it would be excusable to take off her widow's bonnet, not being divorced from Uncle Mose but four months; also how she had better carry her money to keep Bill from getting "a holt" of it. She said she wouldn't trust any white Yankee with a half a dollar that she ever saw, much less a coffee-colored one. Mother was so mad at her, and so troubled about the sad biscuits and the watery gravy at breakfast that she said she hoped he would steal every cent of the seventy-five dollars before the ceremony was over, and maybe *that* would bring her to her senses.

"And me not to get to go to George Washington!" mammy said in a hurt-like voice. "Why, Mis' Mary!"

"Where is this George Washington?" mother took time to ask, thinking mammy would know she was just poking fun at her, but she didn't.

"Law! Ain't it surprising how little my white folks do know! Why, it's the place where the president and his wife lives. Mr. Williams is

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mighty well acquainted with the president and says he's shore I could git a job cooking for the fambly if I was 'round lookin' for jobs. But I ain't to cook for nobody but *him* from now on."

Mother didn't encourage her to talk about her love and matrimony any, so she took me by the hand and we went out and sat down on the kitchen doorstep and had a long conversation. She seemed mighty sad at the notion of leaving us, but was so delighted at the idea of marrying a young man (as anybody naturally *would be*) that she couldn't think of giving that up. Pretty soon in our conversation she commenced telling me about the things that happened many years ago, when I was a little child, like they say folks do when they're going on a long journey or die.

She began from the time I was born, and said I was such a brown little thing that I looked like I had tobacco-juice running through me instead of blood. And I made use of a bottle until I

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was four years old. Because I was the only one of mother's and father's children that lived and was born to them like Isaac (*I don't know of any special way that Isaac was born, but two of mammy's husbands have been preachers, so she knows what she's talking about*) they let me keep the bottle to humor me. It had a long rubber thing to it so I would find it more convenient. Mammy said the old muley cow was just laid aside for my benefit, they thought so much of me, and when I got big enough to walk I'd go with her into the cow-lot every hour in the day and drag my bottle behind me to be milked into. I enjoyed being milked into my mouth, too, if my bottle was too dirty to hold it just then.

Mammy said I always admired the sunshine so much that I would sit out in it on hot days till my milk bottle would clabber, which was one cause of my brownness. When I found out I couldn't draw anything up through the rubber, being all clabbered, I'd begin to cry and run with my bottle to mammy. And she would quiet

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me by digging out all the clabber with a little twig and feed it to the chickens. They got to knowing the sound of me and my bottle rattling over the gravels so well that they'd all come a running like they do when they hear you scrape the plates.

This, of course, was very touching to us both and we nearly cried when she talked about going off to Washington where the people are too stylish to keep a muley cow. They won't even keep a baby in the families there, but the ladies keep little dogs and get divorces.

Mother wouldn't go to the wedding, for dinner and supper were worse than breakfast. The rest of the family all went except Dilsey, who didn't much like the way her mother had treated her about Bill. Professor and Mrs. Young went, being still down there and a great pleasure to us all. They were delighted, being raised up North, and wanted to take pictures of everything. Whenever we would pass a cabin door with a nigger and his guitar sitting in it and

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picking on it they would stop and say that it was so "picturesque." And the real old uncles with white hair and the mammies with their heads tied up they said reminded them of "Aunty Bellum days."

Everything went off as nice as could be expected under the circumstances until the preacher said, "Salute your bride." Then, when Bill started to kiss her, Mammy Lou laid her hand against the side of his head so hard you could have heard the pop up to the big house and said she would show him how to be impudent to a woman of sixty, even if he was a Yankee and educated. Everybody passed it off as a joke, but the slap didn't seem to set very well with Bill, being nineteen years old and not used to such. We left right after the ceremony and Mammy Lou and the others walked on down to her house to wait for the twelve o'clock train that they were going to leave on.

Although I always enjoy going to places with the Youngs on account of the curious

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words and the camera they use, and although it was the sixth marriage of my old nurse, which you don't get a chance to see *every* day, still when I think of breakfast, I must say it was the saddest wedding I ever witnessed.

This morning when I first woke up and heard that regular old tune, *Play on Your Harp, Little David*, coming so natural and lifelike from the kitchen I thought surely it must be a dream, mammy being hundreds of miles away in Washington. The song kept on, though, just like it has done every morning for twenty-five years, mother says:

*"Shad-rach, Me-shach, Abed-ne-go,
The Lord has washed me white as snow,"*

so I got up. It never does take me a minute to wash my face of a morning, and this morning it took even less time. I hopped into my clothes and flew down-stairs. It wasn't any dream!

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There was mammy, not looking like she was married nor anything, and a good, cheerful fire in the stove, and the bacon smelling like you were nearly starved. I didn't ask any questions, but just said, "Mammy," and she said, "Baby," and there I was hugging her fit to turn over the churn. I asked her if mother knew that she come back and she said no, she had been easy and not made any noise, so as to surprise us all. I reckon mother and father are so used to having Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego wake them up of a morning that they thought it was a dream, too. Pretty soon they heard us talking though and came in. Mother came first, for it is the gentleman's place to let the lady go first into the kitchen, especially when they think that breakfast is to be got.

Mother said, "What are you doing here?" and Mammy Lou said, "Getting breakfast, Mis' Mary," which was about as straightforward as they could have been with each other. Mother asked her if she wasn't still married,

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and she said no, for she had "had occasion to give that uppish Yankee nigger a good whippin' las' night." And then she went on to say that she told Dilsey *she* could have him if she still wanted him, and said she hoped Dilsey would take him for she would just *admire* to be mother-in-law to that nigger.

Just then father came in, hearing the last remark about "that nigger," and asked Mammy Lou what the trouble was between her and her new husband. Mammy was breaking eggs into the big yellow bowl which she was going to scramble for breakfast, and as she commenced telling us about her marrying troubles she began to beat them very hard, which seemed to ease her. It is a great help to people to think of their enemies when they are beating things, for it makes them beat all the harder and don't really hurt the enemies.

Mammy said when they got home from the wedding she started to change her white dress and veil and put on her good cashmere dress to

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ride on the train in. Just about that time Mr. Williams spoke up and said he was sleepy and wanted to get a good night's rest so he was going to bed, but he wanted mammy to have him a nice rare steak for his breakfast. Mammy then asked him if he had been born a fool or just turned that way since he had married so far above his station. He said he would mighty soon find out who the *fool* was in that family—and she better have good beaten biscuits to go with the steak. When he said this mammy gave him another sample of her strength like she did in the church and told him to get out of there and change his clothes to go to George Washington. Then he gave a big ha! ha! laugh in her face, right before Dilsey and the neighbors and said why, didn't she know that George Washington had been dead and buried behind the church door for a hundred years? He kept on laughing and said the "ignorance of country niggers is really amusing."

Mammy said she hated to do it with her veil

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on, being a new veil and she hadn't used it but twice, but she couldn't wait to take it off, him grinning like a picture-taking man at his funny joke. All his teeth were showing, and, as mammy had always admired them for being so big and white, she decided she would keep a handful to remember him by; so she gave him one good lick in the mouth with her wedding slipper, which was large and easy to come off. This broke a good half of his front tooth, she said, besides drawing a lot of blood to relieve her feelings. While he was busy wiping away the blood and trying to open his eyes enough to see candle-light again, mammy sat down by him, and, before he knew it, she had dragged him across her lap and was paddling him like he was her own dear son instead of her husband. Then she called Dilsey and told her she might feel safe about marrying him now, if she still wanted him, for he had better sense than to try to fool with any member of *that* family again. Mammy Lou said of course *she* couldn't stay married to

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a man she could paddle. She was too much of a lady. But Dilsey turned up her nose and said she wouldn't have any second-hand nigger, much less a whipped one.

Father spoke up then and said she couldn't give Bill to Dilsey without getting a divorce from him first. Mammy Lou said, well, Marse Sheriff might arrest her and Marse Judge might fine her, but she would see them all in the place that was prepared for them before she would waste twenty-five dollars for just *that* little speck of marrying!

Father went on out to feed the chickens and mother went to wake up Bertha (but not the baby) for breakfast, and Mammy Lou scraped the eggs into the dish I had brought her.

"Divorce *nothin'*," I heard her remark as she soused the hot skillet into water that sizzled, "I done bought a hundred dollars' worth o' divorces *already*, and if the lawyers wasn't all scribes and Pharisees they'd let *that* run me the rest o' my days."

CHAPTER VI

“**Y**ULETIDE in the Southland” is what Professor Young calls it, but you would never know from the sound how nice it really is. It means that the Youngs have come down to the bungalow to spend Christmas and have brought his brother, Julius, to spend it too. Now, I admire Mr. Julius Young, both his name and his ways. He noticed me the minute he got off the train and said I would have to be his sweetheart. Although I have learned, from being so deceived by Doctor Gordon’s remarks like that, you mustn’t depend on what they say, still you can’t help but like a person when they say it to you.

He is not a college professor like his brother, but he makes his living drawing pictures. Now,

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the bad part about making your living out of poetry or art is that so *often* you don't do it. This is the way with Julius. He draws fully as good as other artists, but he never has been able to get people to notice it. Professor Young says his work lacks "the divine spark," and so the poor young man has to heat his coffee over the gas-jet, like they always have to do in pitiful magazine stories. So much poetry and art have made him real thin, with strange flannel shirts, and he looks half like a writing person and half like a hero which was raised out West. He doesn't act as peculiar as he looks, though, laughing as jolly as Mr. Parkes if anything funny happens. And he knows so much about horses, having traveled considerable, that father thinks he is very clever. Father says you can excuse an artist with horse sense better than you can just a plain artist.

Rufe and Cousin Eunice are down in the country too, partly at our house and partly at Rufe's folks'. This makes a nice reunion for

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them, being as Marcella, Rufe's sister, is home for the first time in three Christmases, having been off studying how to play on the piano.

Ever since during the chestnuts getting ripe Marcella has been good friends with me, for she loves the outdoors, and there wasn't anybody but me that had the time to spare to go with her through the woods. She felt sorry for me, too, not getting to go back to school in the city this fall, and so she has taught me a lot. Mother and father said they just couldn't spare me, being the only one that lived, and born to them in their old age. It looks like if my brothers and sisters had known how inconvenient it was for me to be the only child they would have tried a little harder to live.

Marcella is not pretty in a blonde-headed way, like Ann Lisbeth and Bertha, but her hair and eyes are as dark as chocolate candy when you've grated a whole half a cake in it, and her skin looks like cream does when it's nearly ready to churn. She wouldn't go with me and Rufe and

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Cousin Eunice to meet the Youngs at the train, being ashamed on Julius' account, I reckon, both being single. But *we* went and Professor and Mrs. Young said they were too happy for anything to be back in the country again for a regular old-fashioned Christmas. They said they were going to do everything just like it used to be in old England, which Professor Young had brought a book along to read about. They said this book would "infuse a genuine Yule spirit," but if they had scraped as many cake pans and seeded as many raisins as I have they would have more of that spirit now than they could hold without a dose of cordial.

Well, this morning we collected on the other side of the creek to go after holly to decorate the bungalow with, me, the Youngs, and Rufe and Cousin Eunice. Julius said a good many compliments about the nature you could see all over the hills, but Rufe said shucks, if he had *plowed* over that nature as often as *he* had it wouldn't look so pretty.

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Cousin Eunice said let's go straight up through the woods and maybe we would meet Marcella coming back from a poor person's house where she had been to carry sick folks' things to. This plan must have been made up between them, for, sure enough, when we got to the tip-top of the hill we found Marcella sitting under some cedar trees resting, and leaning back against one, just like it was done for a purpose. She had on her red hat and her little red jacket, which set off her pale looks considerable, and if she *did* do it for the sake of Julius she knew the right way to get on the good side of an artist, for he commenced acting impressed from the start. If a person is trying to be romantic it is a better plan to meet a man under a cedar tree with a tired expression than it is to sprain your ankle so they will have to carry you home in their arms, like they do in books. I don't know *why* authors sprain so many of their characters' ankles, and then let them make love smelling of liniment.

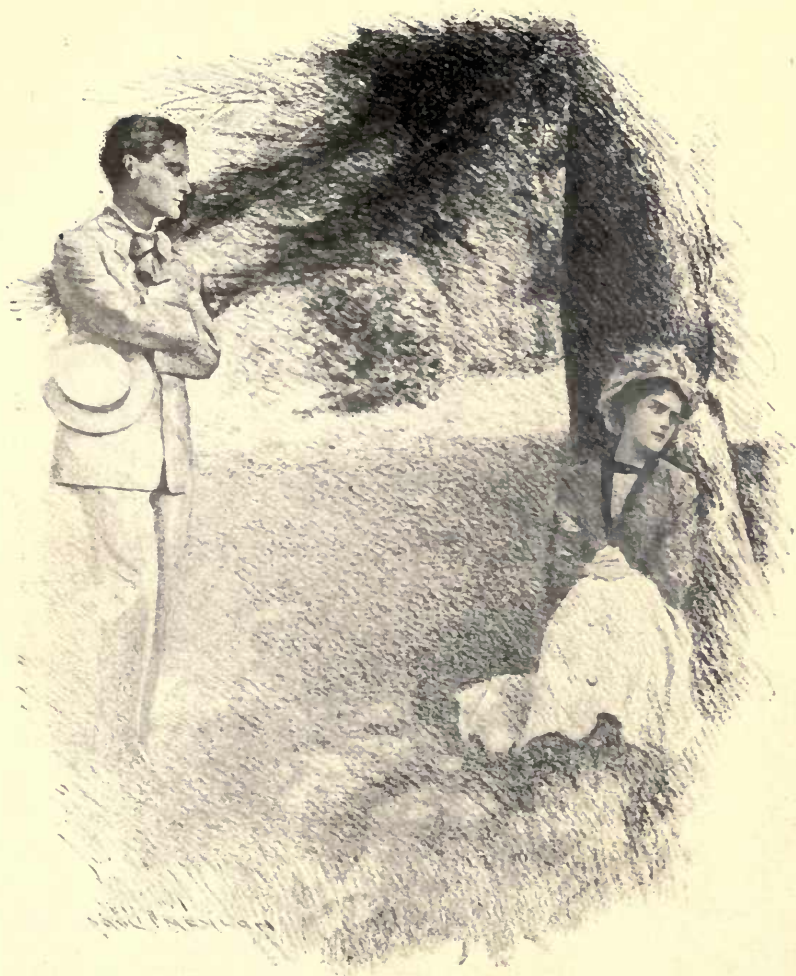
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Mother says in olden times people married each other because the ladies were pretty and could make good cakes and the young men were able to take care of them, but nowadays they marry because they "feel" the same way about things. This is called congenial, and an *overly* congenial person is an "affinity." Cousin Eunice and Rufe felt the same way about Keats and married. Doctor Gordon and Ann Lisbeth both loved white hyacinths and married, and this morning I heard Marcella and Julius say they felt the same way about music. Marcella was playing on the piano in our parlor and we were all listening when Julius remarked:

"Oh, isn't it rare to find a woman who can properly interpret Beethoven?"

Father was in the room and spoke up. "Yes," he said, "and rarer still, in these days, to find one who can properly interpret the *bake-oven*."

Marcella thinks the world and all of Beethoven and Wagner and other persons whose names are not spelt the way you would think.



For the sake of Julius *Page 108*



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Later, when there wasn't anybody present but just those two, I heard Julius ask Marcella if she would "sit" to him. I thought at first he must be proposing, for the folks around here say that Widow Hollis is "setting up to" anybody when she's trying to marry. But Marcella said right away that she would be delighted, which I knew couldn't mean marrying, for when a young lady gets proposed to she never even *lets on* how glad she is, much less says *delighted* right out in plain words. He said her face was the purest Greek he ever saw, which didn't make her mad, although it would me, for a Greek is a smiling, oily-looking person which runs a candy kitchen.

When he mentioned her face looking like a Greek's face she acted so pleased that he went on to tell her he had never been so impressed with anybody's looks in his life as he was with hers that first day under the cedar tree. He said oh, if he had such a model he could do *anything*, for he was sure she had soul as well as beauty.

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The idea of him telling her she had a soul—as if anybody but foreign heathens didn't have! She said she thought it would be a noble life to be a model and inspiration to a man of lofty ideals—like Dan T. Gabriel Rosetty's wife was, only sometimes the *woman* was starved. If I'd been Marcella I'd been ashamed to mention such a thing as not getting enough to eat, but it seemed to please Julius, for he got over closer and commenced making a sketch of her on the back of an envelope.

This morning early Mrs. and Professor Young came over to ask father where they could find a Yule log and a peacock. They said in the "eternal fitness of things" they must have a log to burn all Christmas night and a peafowl to serve with "brilliant plumage" at the dinner table. Mrs. Young went around to the kitchen to ask Mammy Lou if she knew how to prepare the peacock the way they wanted it and brought to the table in its feathers with the tail spread.

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Mammy wasn't a speck more polite than she was last summer about the roosters.

"No, *ma'am*," she told her, "Mis' Mary won't let even so much as a pin feather come on her table, much less a whole crittur covered with 'em. Looks like *that* would turn a nigger's stomach, let alone white folks; but there ain't no 'countin' for the taste o' *Yankees*."

Professor Young tried to explain that he was cooked without the feathers which was put on afterward and an old English custom, but that wouldn't pacify mammy.

"Well, all I can say for the old English is that they must have stomachs on 'em like *buzzards*," mammy told them.

The Yule log was easier and so they got that, but it isn't to be lit till to-morrow night with ceremony.

Julius and Marcella had a long walk through the woods after sarsaparilla vines this afternoon, and talked a good deal about how they would like a house furnished if they were going

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to furnish one. They never got as far as the kitchen and smokehouse, but they both agreed that they would love better than anything in the world to have a dark green library with dull brass jardinières. (I had a *terrible* time with that word.) Julius then spoke up and said *any* kind of a library that had her in it would be artistic enough for *him*, which I thought was saying a great deal, for artists make out like they can't live without their "atmosphere," meaning battered-up tea-kettles and dirty curtains from Persia. Marcella must have thought he meant something by it, too, for she turned as red as when you have a breaking out.

I helped mother and mammy considerable this morning by tasting all the things to see if they were just right, for we are going to have a big dinner to-morrow and invite them all.

To-night we all went over to the bungalow to hear Professor Young read about how they used to do Christmas things in England before the Pilgrim Fathers. It sounded awful nice about

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the waifs singing, "God rest you, merry gentlemen," on the outside of your window, and the servants at dinner bringing in the boar's head, singing too. Professor Young said he thought these old customs ought to be revived, especially in the South, where we had old-timey houses and old family servants. Father laughed and said, well, we *might* get Mammy Lou to bring in the turkey to-morrow to the tune of "There *wuz* er moanin' lady, she *lived* in er moanin' lan'," which was all the tune she knew besides Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, one being about as Christmasy as the other.

After a while Mrs. Young started up the chafing-dish and called Julius from over in the corner where he and Marcella were talking very easy, to help her with the coffee. She hadn't more than said coffee when Professor Young picked up his book again.

"Why, Marie, my love," he interrupted her, "coffee is not at all a drink in keeping with the season. To preserve the unities we ought to

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have a wassail bowl." Then he read us how easy it was to make up the wassail. All you have to do is to take wine, or ale, and sugar and nutmeg, mixed with ginger and spice, then have apples and toast and roasted crabs floating around in it. You must mix it up in an old silver bowl that has been in your family a hundred years with the coat of arms on it. A coat of arms is two peculiar animals standing on their hind legs pawing at each other.

Mrs. Young said she was as anxious to preserve the unities as Augustus, but how could she when there wasn't any wine or ale or ginger or crabs, to say nothing of the silver bowl with the coat of arms marked on it. Rufe said not to worry, for we might find it hard, along toward midnight and day, to preserve much unity between wassail and Welsh rabbit, if we ate them together, so the wassail bowl was dropped.

All during my diary there hasn't been a thing as thrilling to happen as what happened to-day,

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Christmas Day, to Julius and Marcella. Getting your arm broken and carried to the hospital by your future husband wasn't anything to compare with this.

Everybody was happy at the dinner table, me especially, for besides all the books I wanted I got a pyrography set and a pearl ring. I don't think any girl is complete without a pearl ring. The company all praised mammy's cooking and Julius remarked that after such a dinner as that it would be pretty tough on a fellow to go back to town the next day and live on coffee heated over the gas-jet and crackers. We laughed considerable over the gas-jet, all but Marcella, who didn't look funny.

Just as we got the plum pudding burning and Julius had said he wished he could paint a picture of it Dilsey came into the dining-room with a telegram addressed to Mr. Julius Young. This excited Mammy Lou, who admires him very much, so she nearly spilt all the sauce, saying, "Thar! I jes' *know* it's some of yo' folks dead!"

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Julius laughed and told her he reckoned not, as all the folks he had on earth were right there at the table, and he looked at Marcella when he said it in preference to his own brother! Much to all of our disappointment Julius never even opened his telegram and read it, although we didn't say anything about it. He put it in his pocket and went on eating pudding like it wasn't any more to be proud of than just a plain mail letter.

After dinner father took them all out in the garden to look at some new hotbeds he was having made and Julius and Marcella went into the parlor. I stayed in the hall by the door, not being wanted in the parlor and not admiring hotbeds much. They didn't sit down, but went over and stood by the piano and all of a sudden Marcella said nervous-like:

"Why don't you read your telegram? It might contain good news."

"It *is* good news, I feel sure," he told her, "and I wanted you to be the first one to know it

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—that's the reason I didn't mention it at the table."

She said well hurry up and tell her, so he did. He said the day he saw her leaning against the cedar tree he thought she was so beautiful that he went straight back to the bungalow and made a picture of her like she was then and sent it to a large magazine up North which had promised to give five thousand dollars to the person which sent them the best picture by Christmas, and he believed the telegram was to say that his was it. Marcella told him well, he had a high opinion of his work to take it for granted that it had won such a prize as *that*.

"Not at all," he said, catching her hand in his, "for it was a picture of *you*."

This sounded so loving that I wasn't prepared for what came next. I heard them tear open the telegram and Marcella said, "*Good-ness*;" and he said, "Well, I'll be—I wasn't looking for this!" and it made me so interested that before I knew it I was in the parlor, though so easy

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and it nearly dark that I don't think they saw me.

As near as I could make out the telegram told Julius they thought his picture was so good they were not only going to give him the prize like they promised, but wanted to engage him to draw for them all the next year and how much salary would he do it for.

"Why, you can have your green library and brass jardinieres *now*," Marcella said, still holding hands and her voice like it was about to cry. He just looked at her and looked a long time without saying a word. Finally he put both hands on her shoulders and looked down into her eyes.

"I can have nothing without you," he said in the most devoted voice I ever heard. "It is your beauty that has made my picture succeed. If I amount to anything you will have to come with me—will you?"

"You want me for your model?" she asked very quivery and making out like she didn't

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know what he was driving at, but she put her hands up on his shoulders too, which was enough to give her away.

“True, I can not draw without you for my model,” he said so grand and sweet that it made you feel very strange listening to it, “but I can not *live* without you for my wife.”

This won her. It was enough to win *anybody*, coming from an artist, and good looking at that.

CHAPTER VII

BEING in love with Marcella weighed so on Julius' mind that he couldn't stay in New York but one week where the magazine is that he draws for, so he came back and has been here ever since, loving and drawing and sending them the jobs by mail. Right away they set the wedding for the eleventh of April, which seems like it *never* will come, me being in a big hurry for it. Poor Julius gets more and more delighted every day, talking a heap about what a happy home they're going to have, not realizing that Chopin and dish-pan don't go together. He stays around and advises Marcella about her clothes and such-like all day long. He says she reminds him of a narcissus, being tall and creamy-skinned, so he wants all

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her dresses to be either white or light green, the color of right young lettuce. But she knows when really to take his advice and when just to make like she's taking it, the way most ladies do with men.

"Why, it would take a little pink milksop like Bertha Parkes to wear such colors as *those*," she said behind his back one day. But I don't think Marcella better be calling Bertha a *milk-sop* just because she has to handle baby-bottles all the time, for a person never can tell what might happen to them.

One of the nicest things about the wedding is the bridesmaids. They consist of girls born partly here in the country, partly in the cities Marcella has visited and made friends with. The one I like best is Miss Cicely Reeves, though most people around here call her Cis, being very small, with fluffy hair and cute ways and dimples. She has a good many lovers of different kinds, but don't seem to like one above another. She is a great hand to act romantic,

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such as falling in love with a man in a street-car, or expecting her future husband to be a certain size and comb his hair a certain way and things like that. This often keeps young ladies from getting married a long time, for mother says you oughtn't to be too choice about size and hair, but I can't help being on that order myself. I do hope I can marry a man on a jet-black charger named Sir Reginald de Beverley who owns *acres* and *acres* of English landed gentry.

Miss Cis had that experience with the *name* of Julius' best man. It happened that we were all sitting on the front step one day when Julius pulled a letter out of his pocket and told Marcella that he had just heard from Malcolm Macdonald, and that he was going to be his best man.

"*Who?*" asked Miss Cis right quick, looking up from the sprig of bridal wreath she was pulling the flowers off of.

Julius told her the name over again and then

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told her that he was a very old friend of his and was a fine civil engineer. I used to think a civil engineer was a *polite* man who ran the trains, but I know now he is a man that gets in the middle of the street with a string and a three-legged thing and measures the road.

“Is he married?” Miss Cis asked a heap quicker than she had asked who.

“No, and not likely to be,” Julius answered, still looking over the letter absent-mindedly.

“The name sounds good,” Miss Cis commenced, her eyes sparkling. “I never heard anything Scotchier. Something tells me he must be my ideal.”

“Then ‘something’ must be telling you a lie,” Julius said laughing, “for he couldn’t be any woman’s ideal. He is very *real*. An old bachelor, thirty-seven years, stern and precise; and he considers every woman on earth as a frivolous and *unnecessary* evil.”

“The kind of man I adore,” Miss Cis said joyfully, though anybody that knew her well

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could tell she was fooling. "My life will be a blank until he comes!"

"It would be a blankety-blank if you had to live with him, for you are the kind of woman to torment such a man to death."

"All the more reason for his falling in love with me, as I have fallen in love with his name, and if he doesn't I shall consider him a very *uncivil* engineer." Which was just her way of talking. This happened fully two months ago, but they have talked about it off and on ever since. And now he is coming to stay with Julius till the wedding, to cheer him up I suppose.

Sure enough he did come to-day, although lots of times I imagine that I never will get to see a person I have heard spoken of so often and in such high tones—and sometimes I wish I hadn't. But it wasn't that way with Mr. Macdonald. Nobody on earth could have been disappointed in *him* for he is one of the tallest gentlemen I ever saw with trousers so smoothly

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creased that they look like somebody had ironed them after he put them on. He takes his own time about saying things, being very careful about saying "of whom" and "by which" like the grammar tells you to.

Julius brought him over to Marcella's this afternoon so he could be making friends with her and the bridesmaids that were collected there. Remembering how they had been teasing Miss Cis about him I kept my eye on her from the minute he walked through the door. I was greatly disappointed though, for she never *seemed* to notice him. I guess she took a better look at him than I imagined though, for the minute they were gone she jumped clear across the room to where Marcella was standing and grabbed her and danced up and down.

"Isn't he *beautiful!*" she said all out of breath. "I'm just crazy about him! Did you ever see such Gibsony feet and legs in your *life?*" Which mortified her mother, it being impolite to mention feet and legs in her days.

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Julius is romantic, too, for a man, and says he doesn't want any flowers used in connection with his wedding except the sweet, early spring ones that favor Marcella so much. We have a yard full of them and so mother told them this morning that they better come over and gather them, knowing that young folks enjoy picking flowers together and they will stay fresh for several days if you put a little salt in the water.

It was the most beautiful morning you ever saw, with birds and peach blossoms and the smell of plowed ground all making curious feelings inside of you. Marcella, being a musician, noticed the birds, and Julius, being an artist, noticed the peach blossoms, but Mr. Macdonald, being just a man, noticed Miss Cis. She would walk along without noticing him and take a seat in the farthest corner away from him, but anyhow she seemed to do the work, which taught me a lesson; that if you're trying to get a man to notice you it is the best plan not to notice them except when they ain't looking.

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They sat down on the porch and rested a while after they came while the narcissuses (narcissi *they* called them, which sounds stuck up to me) smelled very sweet from the yard. Julius remarked he wished they had made Rufe come along with them so he could have said poetry out of Keats, as it was just the kind of day to make you feel Keatsy; and pretty soon he and Marcella got on to their favorite subject, "The Ruby Yacht," which they say is a piece of poetry from Persia. They talked and talked, which made me very sleepy and pretty soon I noticed that Mr. Macdonald was getting sleepy too. He leaned over to Miss Cis and said, kinder whispery:

"I don't understand poetry, do you?"

"No, I don't," she answered back, with a smile on her face which I knew she meant to be "congenial." I knew this was a story, for she talks about "The Ruby Yacht" as much as anybody when he ain't around, but I didn't blame her for telling one in a case like this.

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"I never could discover what the deuced Ruby Yacht was about, in the first place," he said.

"It looks like, from the name," I said speaking up, "that it would be about a red ship," but before I could get any further they began to laugh and tell my remark to Julius and Marcella, which was mortifying. This broke up the poetry talk and they began gathering the flowers, Miss Cis and Mr. Macdonald picking in pairs, by which I knew they were getting affinityfied.

After they had picked till their backs were tired Mammy Lou came out on the porch bringing a waiter with some of her best white cake and a bottle of her year-before-last-before-that's wine setting on it and her finest ruffled cap, very proud. She was curious to see the young man "Miss Cis was settin' up to, to see whether the match was a fittin' one or not." She took a good look at him, then called Miss Cis into the hall to speak her opinion.

"He'll *do*," I heard her saying, while Miss Cis

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was telling her to “s-s-sh, Mr. MacDonald would hear her.”

“He’ll *do*,” mammy kept on, not paying any attention to what was told her, like she always don’t. “He must be all right, for bein’ a frien’ o’ Mr. Juliuses would pass ’im.’ But, honey, he *is* tolerable *po-faced*, which ain’t no good sign in marryin’. If thar’s anybody better experienced in that business than *me* and King Solomon I’d like to see the whites o’ ther eyes; an’ I tell you every time, if you want to get a good-natured, wood-cuttin’, baby-tendin’ husban’ choose one that’s *fat in the face!*”

A good many wedding presents commenced to coming in this morning, which was a sign that the invitations got to the people all right. You often hear of things being worth their weight in silver, but there’s *one* thing you can count on it’s being true about and that is wedding invitations. You never saw such delighted people as Julius and Marcella. They were laid out on tables in the parlor and greatly admired.

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"They're *ours*, dearest," he said, squeezing her hand right before everybody, "yours and mine! Our Lares and Penates."

This greatly impressed me and I looked it up in the back of the dictionary when I got home, which is a very useful place to find strange words. It said: "Lares et Penates, household gods," which didn't make sense, so I knew the dictionary man must have made a mistake and meant to say household *goods*.

"Gentle-men!" said Mammy Lou when I told the words to her, "if he thinks up such names as *them* for his fu'niture what *will* he do when he gets to his chil'en?"

This remark seemed to put an idea into her head, for Lovie, mammy's other daughter besides Dilsey, has got a pair of two little twins that have been going around for the last five years in need of a name just because Mammy Lou and Ike, their father, can't ever agree on one—a name nor anything else.

"Them's the very names for the little angels,"

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Mammy said, washing the dinner dishes deep in thought, "for the twins bein' boys and girls and the names bein' able to accommodate themselves to ary sect proves that they're the *very thing*." She studied over it for a good while, I guess on account of Ike, although mammy is usually what she calls very plain-spoken with him. A plain-spoken person is one that says nasty things to your face and expects you not to get mad. When they say them behind your back they're "diplomatic." But finally she started off to name them, and, having had so much trouble already with Ike, I saw her slip her heavy-soled slippers into her pocket before she started. She stayed away a long, long time, but when she got back she held her head so high and acted so stuck-up that I just knew she had got to use both the names and the slippers.

"Did you name 'em?" I asked her, going to the kitchen to get some tea-cakes, supper being very late.

"*Did I?*" she answered back, cutting out the

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biscuits with a haughty look, "you just oughter a *saw* me namin' 'em!"

"Which did you name which?" I asked.

"I named the precious boy Penates, because I most know these common niggers roun' here'll shorten it to 'Peanuts' which would be hurtin' to a little girl's feelin's."

"Well," I said, continuing to show a friendly interest, "ain't you glad they're named at last, so's if they die you could have a tombstone for them?"

"Glad!" she answered, putting the biscuits in the pan (but her mind still on the twins), and sticking holes in the top of them with a fork, "glad ain't no name for it! Why, I ain't had as much enjoyment out o' nothin' as I had out o' this namin' sence the night I married Bill Williams!"

It's a very thrilling and exciting thing to be a bride and if you can't be a bride you can still manage to get a good many thrills out of just a

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bridesmaid. All of Marcella's have talked about how nervous and timid they are going to be—when the men are around—and some say they nearly faint when a great crowd stares at them, others say they bet folks will think they've got St. Vituses' dance from trembling so; anyhow, they're all very modest. But Miss Cis, I believe, ain't putting on, for all she claims toward modestness is that her knees get so weak that they nearly let her drop when she acts a bridesmaid, which is the way a good many persons feel. The maids have laughed a good deal over her knees among themselves, never dreaming that the men would catch on to them, but they did in the following manner:

Miss Cis stayed all night at Marcella's last night to tell secrets for the last time, for after a lady is married you can't be too careful about telling her your secrets; and early this morning I ran over and saw her dressed in a pretty blue kimono, which set off her good looks greatly, down by the woodpile which they keep in the

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side yard. There is a hedge of honeysuckle which runs between the garden and the yard and she appeared to be searching on the ground for something close to this hedge. I went up to where she was, admiring her company, and she smiled when she saw me.

“Ann,” she said, very pleasantly, “can you help me find two nice, little, smooth, thin boards?”

I complimented her on her kimono and said yes'm to the board question, then asked her what she wanted with them.

“My knees,” she answered laughing, “they're so idiotic that when I get excited they threaten to let me drop. If I could strap two nice little boards to them, at the back, you know, it would prop them up and be *such* a help!”

“You couldn't walk very good,” I told her, but she said oh, yes she could; and to prove it she commenced whistling the wedding march and walking stiff-kneed away from the woodpile to the tune of it. She looked so funny that I started

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to laugh, when just then I heard another laugh on the other side of the honeysuckle vines. I found a place where I could peep through and saw it was Julius and Mr. Macdonald who had come out to view Mr. Clayborne's hotbeds, and greatly complimenting them, Julius knowing that it's a fine thing to stay on the good side of your father-in-law in case you lose your job.

I knew they heard what Miss Cis had said, for they were laughing very hard, which caused Mr. Macdonald to look real young, being as his eyes can twinkle. I knew it would be mortifying for her to see that they had heard her, so I hollered and told her that I heard Marcella calling her from the up-stairs window, so she ran right on in without coming back to the woodpile. I started to go on after her, but just as I got to the kitchen door I remembered that I had left my pretty white sunbonnet that Mammy Lou had freshly ironed for me on the woodpile and ran back to get it.

Julius and Mr. Macdonald were right where

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they were, only looking in the other direction and talking very seriously, so I stayed a minute out of friendly interest.

“Although so bright and amusing she is never silly,” I heard Mr. Macdonald’s long, slow voice saying. “She is a very lovely, fascinating little woman.” So I took a seat on the woodpile.

“You’d better fall in love with her,” Julius said, cutting the briers off of a long switch he held in his hand, and talking careless like, as if he wasn’t paying much attention.

“Your advice comes too late,” Mr. Macdonald said, his voice so solemn that Julius looked up in surprise.

“What!” Julius remarked.

“Yes,” Mr. Macdonald said, sounding very devoted, “I did that very thing the first moment I looked at her dear, sweet face.”

Julius stared at him a minute, then laughed a tickled laugh; and I moved my seat right up to the hedge so I could get a good look at them—it was the next best thing to a proposal.

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“That’s the funniest thing I ever heard of,” Julius said after he had quit laughing.

“It’s devilish funny to *you*,” poor Mr. Macdonald said, looking like he didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. “But—what am I to do?”

“Do?” said Julius very businesslike, like folks talk when they’re telling you to follow *their* example. “What do men in your situation usually do? Why, propose to her!”

“But *she’d* never marry *me*,” he said looking right pitiful, for he spoke as humble as if he wasn’t any taller than me, and him over six feet tall. “It would be the most absurd thing in the world for a man like me to propose to a woman like her!”

“No, you’re wrong,” Julius told him, still half laughing, “the *most* absurd thing would be that she would accept you!”

I’m awfully tired to-night and it would cramp my hand nearly to death to write all about the wedding—how Julius looked happy up to the last, and how Marcella cried just enough to ap-

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pear ladylike on her lace handkerchief ; and how the family relatives cried a little too. Weddings are all alike, but proposals are all different, and I think I'd better use more space on them in my diary, so my grandchildren won't get sleepy over the sameness. But it would be a waste of handwriting to tell how Miss Cis tormented poor Mr. Macdonald all day, making him chase around after her trying to get in a private, loving word ; and me just crazy to see whether she really was going to accept him or not, although I *might* have known !

He followed her up though, looking so brave and determined that he reminded me of "The boy stood on the burning deck." She worried him so that all through the ceremony he looked so pale and troubled that you'd have thought it was *him* getting married. Finally, just before it was time for the train that he was going back to town on to blow she changed about and commenced acting sweet.

All this was nice enough to watch, but is



He followed her up though *Page 138*

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cranping to write about, and anyhow, the main thing with me was to see whether she was going to accept him or not. I stayed close to their heels all day, but he didn't get a chance to propose until just after dark, down by the front gate, with nobody around except me and a calecanthus bush and—well, you just ought to have *seen* her accepting him!

CHAPTER VIII

EVER since my last birthday there has a great change come over me for I have not kept my diary. Mother took me to one side that morning and said it was time for me to act like I was growing up now. She said many a girl as big as me could pick a chicken and I couldn't do a thing but write a diary; and would even run and stop up my ears every time Mammy Lou started to wring one's head off. She said all the ladies of the neighborhood nearly worried her to death advising her to teach me how to work and saying it was simply ridiculous for a great big girl like me to lie flat on her stomach reading a book all day in the grass. This shows how I am misunderstood by my family, and I told mother so, but she said for good-

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ness' sake not to get *that* idea into my head, for girls that were always complaining about being "misunderstood" were the kind that got divorces from their husbands afterward. I know this won't be the way with me, though, for I expect to live on good terms with Sir Reginald, always wearing pink satin and spangles even around the castle; and never getting mussy-looking when I give the children a bath in hopes of retaining his affections, like they tell you to in ladies' magazines. But I didn't mention Sir Reginald to mother, or she would have misunderstood me worse than ever.

Goodness! I reckon the neighbors would have a fit if they could see me of a night when I dress up and step out on the porch roof, making like I'm Juliet in Shakespeare. I wear a lace thing over my head and let a pair of Cousin Eunice's last year's bedroom slippers represent Romeo with fur around the top. They are the kind he wore the night they took me to see him and are all I can find in the house that looks at

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all like him. Nobody gets to see me doing this, though, for I lock the door. Somehow I think it would be a nicer world if you could always lock the door on your advising friends.

Last summer Rufe said I was so clever for my age (*he* said) that I ought to be in the city (I like this kind of advice) at a good school; so father and mother decided to move to the city and take Mammy Lou and spend the winter and all the other winters until I could get educated and live in a flat. So we went, me writing much sorry poetry about leaving my old home. The older I get the more I think of poetry and I reckon by the time I'm engaged I'll be crazy about it!

Our leaving was very sad, poor little Lares and Penates crying so hard at the depot where they went to tell Mammy Lou good-by that a drummer who was traveling with a kind heart gave them a quarter apiece to hush.

I never admired the name of flat from the first and when we started to rent one I admired

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it less than ever. It consists of a very large house, divided up, and no place to kill a chicken. There is also no place to warm your feet, nor to pop corn. In fact, there are more places where you *can't* do things than where you can. Rufe took us to every one in town nearly, and mammy paid particular attention to how the kitchens were fixed and asked what became of the potato peelings with no pigs to eat them up. Finally, after everything had been explained to her, she spoke up in the midst of a lady's flat with tears in her eyes and said:

“Mis' Mary, le's go back to the country whar slop is called *slop*; up here it's '*gawbage!*' ”

Father and mother were both delighted that going back had been mentioned without either one of *them* saying it first, for both of their feet were sore from looking for flats; and they like to have fallen over each other in agreeing with mammy.

“God never intended for *human beings* to live in flats,” father said, after the elevator had put

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us down on dry land once more, drawing a deep breath.

“Nor in cities either,” Rufe agreed, with a far-away look in his eyes, like he might be thinking of the chestnut hunts and black haws of his boyhood.

That night they said well, they had found out they couldn't live in the city, and they weren't going to be separated from me, and I *had* to be educated; so Rufe then told them that a governess was the next best thing. This sounded so much like a young girl in a book that at first I was delighted. A governess is a very clean person that always expects you to be the same. Only in books they are usually drab-colored young ladies without any nice clothes or parents, but the son of the family falls in love with them, much to their surprise, and they lose their job. Then the son gets sent away to India with his regiment, where he hopes he can meet sweet death through a bullet hole. This is the way they are in books.

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Mine, though, is not anything like that, being very pretty and pink, and with a regular father and mother like other folks have. But there is a great mystery connected with her. Don't anybody but me know about it, and I don't know *all* about it. From the very first she seemed to have something on her mind; this is very unusual for a young girl, so I tried to find out what the cause of it was. One day at the dinner table when she had been here about two weeks father remarked that I was learning faster from her than I ever had, and he hoped that she would stay here with us until I was finished being educated and not be wanting to get married, like most young ladies. Miss Wilburn, instead of laughing as one would expect, turned red in the face (her first name is Louise) and said something that sounded like "Oh no!"

Mammy, who was in the room at the time, spoke up as she usually does and said well, there must be something wrong with her if she didn't want to marry, as all right-minded women mar-

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ried once and extra smart ones married as often as there was any occasion to! Instead of smiling Miss Wilburn looked more painful than ever; so mammy, who thinks enough of her to *even* do up her shirtwaists, changed the subject.

That night when I went into the kitchen to talk to mammy during the cooking her mind was still on the subject of Miss Wilburn and marrying.

"Honey," she said to me, flipping over the cakes with great conviction, "I've been thinking it over and the long and short of it is that pore child's been *fooled!* I know them *symptoms!* She's been fooled and she's grievin' over it. Though thar ain't no use for a woman to grieve over nary *one* man so long's she under forty and got good front teeth!"

I said oh, I hoped not. I hated to think about the lover of my governess proving false! I told mammy maybe he had just died or something else he couldn't help. But she interrupted me.

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“Died nothin’! That ain’t no excuse, for thar’s allus time to marry no matter what you’re fixin’ to do. Thar ain’t nothin’ no excuse for not marryin’ in this world,” she kept on, “be it male or female. You needn’t be settin’ thar swingin’ your legs and arguin’ with *me* about the holy estate!”

The very first minute I thought there was anything of a loving nature connected with Miss Wilburn I got out my diary to write it down, as you see. She had told mother anyhow to let me keep it as it would “stimulate my mental faculties” and they would never be able to make a chicken-picking person out of me. I’m going to keep it right here in the drawer and jot down everything I see, although I am *convinced* that the lover is dead. Julius and Marcella are down here now for the first time since they were married. We see them a great deal, for they love to go walking through the woods with Miss Wilburn and me; but I can’t waste my diary writing about them *now*.

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I just happened to think what a pity it was that I didn't try to find out the mystery about Miss Wilburn from Rufe and Cousin Eunice when we was up there last summer, for they knew her real well before we got her. In fact, for the first few days she and I didn't have any congenial things to talk about except them and tiny Waterloo. Waterloo's little name by rights is Rufus Clayborne, Junior, and he occurred at a time when I wasn't keeping my diary; but my grandchildren would have known about him anyhow, he being their little fifth cousin. He is very different from Bertha's baby, for he is a boy. I thought when I first saw him that if there was anything sweeter in this world than a girl baby it is a boy one!

Rufe and Cousin Eunice have lately been kinder New Thought persons, which think if you have "poise" enough there can't anything on earth conquer you. Rufe bragged particularly about nothing being able to conquer *him* or get him in a bad temper, he had so much

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poise. But when little Rufus was just three nights old and he had walked him the other *two* and he was still squalling he threw up his job.

“Poise be hanged!” Cousin Eunice told us he said, “I’ve met *my* Waterloo!” And they’ve called him that ever since.

When we were up there in the summer Waterloo was giving his father considerable trouble about the editorials. An editorial is a smart remark opposite the society column; and Rufe couldn’t think up smart things while he was squalling.

“Oh, for a desert island!” he said one night when he was awful busy and couldn’t get anything done. “Oh, for a mammoth haystack where I might thrust my head to drown the noise—I’ve read that Jean Jacques Rousseau used to do so! Listen, I’ve made a rhyme!”

“’Tis not rhymes but dimes we need most just now; so go on with your work,” Cousin Eunice said, gathering Waterloo together to take him up-stairs.

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“Merely removing the location of the noise will lessen it but slightly,” Rufe called to her as she got to the door. “Seriously, do you know of a hayloft in the neighborhood where I might go?”

“You might go next door to the Williams’ garage and thrust your head into their can of gasolene—*that’s* the latter-day equivalent for hay!” Cousin Eunice answered kinder-mad, for *she* admires Waterloo, no matter how he acts.

So Miss Wilburn and I talked over all we knew about the little fellow; and I thought what a mistake I’d made in not asking Cousin Eunice what Miss Wilburn’s lover’s name was and where he is buried and a few other things like that. But then I couldn’t, because I didn’t know that there was a lover. Still, Mammy Lou can talk till her hair turns straight and she won’t get me to believe that he’s anything else but dead. Everything seems to point to it, from the fact of her not getting any letters from young men and looking lonesome at times and not wearing any

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diamond engagement ring. I'm sure he gave her one, but maybe his wicked kinfolks made her give it back to them after the funeral. Or maybe she buried it in his grave. I don't know why Miss Wilburn never talks about him for one of our neighbors talks all the time about her husband which was killed in the war. I used to be delighted to hear her commence telling about him. He was killed at the battle of Shiloh and was the tallest and handsomest man in the army. She takes a great deal of pleasure in talking about him, and when there are summer boarders at her house he grows to be nearly seven feet tall and so handsome that it hurts your eyes to look at him. Her second husband is stone deaf and can't hear it thunder, which makes it nicer for them, for while it amuses her to talk about her first husband's good looks it ain't hurting to the second one's feelings.

The autumn leaves are just lovely now and make you want to write a book, or at least a piece of poetry. It's right hard on you, though,

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not to have anything to write about but a girl without a beau. It's kinder like eating sweet potatoes without butter. I decided this morning that I better make the most of what I have got as a subject, so I started to writing one called *The Maiden Widow*. I've heard of a book by that name, but I don't reckon they'll have me arrested for writing just a short poem by the same name. We have some nature study every morning in the woods, which is one of the best things about having a governess. She lets me do just as I like, so I took my tablet and while she was writing some history questions I composed on my poem. It is very discouraging work, though, to write about widows, for there's nothing on earth that will rhyme with them. I got one line, "The maiden widow, she wept, she did, oh!" which was sorry enough sounding, but I didn't know whether or not it was exactly fair to have two words rhyming with just one. After a while I thought maybe a regular poet could do a better job by it than even I could, so I de-

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cided to ask Marcella to ask Julius to write me a few lines as a copy to go by, for anybody that can draw such lovely pictures ought to be able to write poetry.

Marcella came over this afternoon and I took her up-stairs very secretly to ask her about it. She said why, what on earth made me think that Miss Wilburn was grieving over a dead lover, and I told her that *everything* made me think it. After studying about it for a little while she said well, it might be that I was right, for the girl did seem to have something preying on her mind. But she said such subjects were not suitable for children of my age to be writing about and that I ought to write about violets and sparrows. I said then would she please find out from Julius whether or not there was a rhyme for widow, for I might want to write a poem on them when I got grown, but she said, "Ann, you are incorrigible," which I keep forgetting to look up in the dictionary, although it looks like I would, for it has been said to me so many times.

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A thing happened this morning which made me understand what Shakespeare must have meant when he said "Much Ado About Nothing." It reminded me of the time Cousin Eunice rushed to the telephone and called Rufe up and said, "Oh, dearest, the baby's got a tooth!" This was harmless enough in itself, but it is when things are misunderstood that the trouble comes in. Rufe misunderstood and thought she said, "The baby's got the croup," which is very dangerous. So he didn't stop to hear another word, but dropped the telephone and grabbed his hat. It was night, for Rufe's paper is a morning one that works its men at night, and didn't wait for a car, but jumped into a carriage, which costs like smoke. He drove by Doctor Gordon's house and told the driver to run in and tell Doctor Gordon to come right on and drive to his house with him, as his baby was very sick, although Doctor Gordon has an automobile of his own. He and Ann Lisbeth happened to have a few friends in to play cards

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with them that night, but when she heard the news about the baby she told the company that Cousin Eunice was one of the best friends she had in the world and she would have to go on over and see if she could help any. So the card party was broken up and they all drove as hard as they could tear over to Rufe's house, where they found Cousin Eunice tickled to death over the tooth and washing Waterloo's little mouth out with boric acid water, which is the proper thing. This is what I call much ado about nothing, and I'm sure Shakespeare would if he was living to-day.

What happened this morning was equally as exciting and a long story, so I'm going to stop and sharpen my pencil, for I despise to write exciting things with a pencil that won't half write.

I reckon some people might lay the blame on me for what happened, but it ain't so at all, if people hadn't just misunderstood me. Anyhow, it may make me "curb my imagination," as

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Julius says, for that is what they blamed it all on.

When we started out for our nature study this morning father said if we could stand the sight of human nature a little would we go down town right after train time and get the mail? We said yes and Marcella, who was with us, said she would be glad to go in that direction, for Julius was there and we could meet him and he would walk home with us. She still likes to see him every few minutes in the day.

There are usually several very handsome drummers and insurance men and things like that standing around the post-office which have just got off of the train at this hour, but this morning there wasn't anybody but one strange man and he was talking to Julius like he knew him. When we passed by Julius spoke to us and I noticed that the strange man looked at Miss Wilburn and looked surprised. All in a minute I thought maybe he was the lover which had just returned from some foreign shore, in-

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stead of being dead, and would run up with open hands and say, "Louise," and she would say, "Marmaduke," and all would be well.

I learned afterward, though, that his name is Mr. White and he lives in the city and has come down here on business and knew Julius. After we had passed he remarked that he was surprised to see Miss Wilburn down here as he didn't know she was away from home. Julius asked him if he knew Miss Wilburn and he said no, but he knew Paul Creighton, the fellow she was going to marry, mighty well. Julius, instead of not saying anything as a person ought, spoke up and said why he understood that Miss Wilburn's sweetheart was dead. The strange man said why he was utterly shocked for he had seen Creighton on the streets only a few days before, but he *had* looked kinder pale and worried then. He said it made him feel weak in the knees to hear such a thing, and Julius commenced saying something about it must be a mistake then, but Mr. White said no, he guessed

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it was so, for Mr. Creighton had looked awful pale and thin, like he might be going into consumption. Julius said well he was certain his wife had told him something about Miss Wilburn having a dead lover, but he hadn't paid much attention to what she was saying, like most married men; but it surely couldn't be so. By that time Mr. White was moving down the street to where we were and was asking Julius to introduce him to Miss Wilburn, so he could find out the particulars about poor old Creighton. I *will* give Julius credit for trying to stop him, but he is one of the kind of persons that never knows when to say a thing and when not to, Mr. White, I mean. And before Julius could get him side-tracked they had caught up with us and there wasn't anything else to do but introduce him. Miss Wilburn smiled very joyfully when she heard his name, and in a minute he had got her off to one side and I heard him saying something about how horrified he was to hear the news about poor Creighton. In just

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an instant Miss Wilburn was the one that looked horrified and said why *what?* This seemed to bring Mr. White to his right mind a little and instead of going ahead and telling it he turned around to Julius and said:

“Why our friend, Young, here, was telling me that——”

“I *told* you that it must be a mistake,” Julius spoke up, looking awfully uncomfortable, “but I remember my wife saying that—oh, say, Marcella, explain—will you?”

“Why, Julius Young,” Marcella commenced in a married-lady tone, “you promised me that you wouldn’t say a word about it; anyway we only suspected——”

“Will *nobody* tell me what has happened to Paul?” Miss Wilburn said in a low, strangled voice, like she couldn’t get her breath good.

“Ain’t anything happened to him that *we* know of,” I told her, for Julius and the rest of them looked like they were speechless. “We thought *you* knew it!”

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“Knew *what?* Oh, for the love of Heaven, tell me!” she said, poor thing! And I felt awful sorry for us all, but for Miss Wilburn and me in particular.

I just couldn't tell her we thought he was *plumb* dead, so I told her we thought he must be very sick or something.

“He may be,” she answered, not looking any happier. “I haven't heard from him since I've been here! Oh, it serves me right for acting such an idiot as to run off down here and forbid his writing to me! He may be desperately ill! How did you hear it?”

“Ain't anybody heard it *yet!*” I told her, feeling so angry at Marcella and Julius and Mr. White for telling such a thing and so ashamed of myself for making it up that I couldn't think very well. I kept wishing in my mind that it was the first day of April so I could say “April Fool,” or an earthquake would happen or *anything* else to pass it off; but didn't anything happen, so I had to stand there with

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all of them looking at me and tell Miss Wilburn how Mammy Lou said *she* believed she had been fooled because she looked so sad at the mention of marrying, but *I* believed the gentleman was dead.

Well, it took every one of us every step of the way home to explain it to her and to each other, each one of us talking as hard as we could; and Julius remarked what he'd do the next time he heard any such "sewing-society tales" under his breath.

Just as we got in sight of the house poor Miss Wilburn was so worn out with grief and anxiety that she sat down on the big stump and laughed and cried as hard as she could. Mother saw her from the window and she and mammy ran down to where we were to see what it was all about. She patted Miss Wilburn on the back and on the head and said, "poor dear," while mammy said she would run right back to the house and brew her some strong tea, which was splendid when a body was distressed about a man.

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“There, dear, talk to us about him,” mother said, after the whole story was told, “tell us about him, for talking will do you good. You’ve been unnaturally quiet about him since you’ve been here!”

“I was trying to find out whether or not I really loved him,” Miss Wilburn said, after Julius and Marcella had left us and we were going on up the walk. “It was silly of me, for all the time I’ve been so lonesome for him that I felt as if I should scream if anybody suggested men or marrying to me!”

“Yes, you pore lamb,” mammy said, walking on fast to make the tea, “you loves him, you shore do. I knows them symptoms!”

CHAPTER IX

I THINK if the person which remarked, "It is not always May," had said April he would have come nearer hitting it, for I think it is the most beautiful time of all. There's something in the very feelings at this time of the year that makes you want to write pretty things, whether you know what you want to say or not. So I have got out my diary and dusted it off, it being laid away in the drawer ever since last fall, when I told about me getting Miss Wilburn's affairs so mixed up because there hasn't been anything happening.

One time not long ago I did get out my diary, for I got very excited over the news that a *widow* was here, and I sharpened seventeen pencils so as to be ready for her. But she had the

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misfortune to marry, before I could get introduced to her, a man from her same city which had got on the train and followed her down here. She was a lovely, high-heeled, fluffy-petticoated kind of a widow and I could have written *chapters* out of her I know; because all the time she was down here the ladies' sewing circle met three times a week and talked so that father said he heard they had to pass around potash tablets instead of refreshments for the sake of their sore throats.

Mammy Lou made fun of me when I told her how disappointed I was over not getting to meet such a pretty lady and write her experiences.

"Looks like you'd a knew better than to expect a widow to waste time a-cou'tin'," she told me with that proud look coming over her face that always does when she begins to brag on herself. "*They* don't cou't; they marries! Thar ain't nobody able to dispute with *me* over the ways o' widows, for ain't I done been *six* of them *myself*?"

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This ain't exactly so, it's just five, for she never has got that divorce from Bill Williams yet; and she says now that she's going to spend the money that the divorce would cost in beautifying herself so she can marry again. She says she wants to buy her a stylish set of bangs and a pair of kid gloves to go with them, then she is going to let the next man make her a present of the divorce for a bridal gift.

"And you needn't be settin' it down in that little dairy book o' yourn, neither, for your gran'chillen to be makin' spo't o' *me* about after I'm done dead an' gone."

I told her it was diary, not dairy, but she wouldn't listen to me.

"Go 'long with that stuck-up talk," she told me, "ain't I been knowin' about dairies all my life? An' I never even heered tell of a *di-ry* till I learned to my sorrow of that pesky little book that's always gettin' lost and me havin' to find it." And I couldn't blame her very much for this, me being a great hand myself to get words

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mixed up in my childhood, especially such words as epistle and apostle. I always thought that ignorant people said "epistle" and smart ones "apostle."

But as I was saying, a sweetheart is the proper thing to get in the spring if you *can* get one; but if you're too little for such a thing a kindred spirit is the next best thing a girl can have. A kindred spirit is a girl you lay awake till twelve o'clock of a night telling secrets to. Of course *men* never tell secrets, but they often need a kindred spirit, that is, a close friend, especially when they get so sick they think they're about to die they want the friend to run quick to their private office and burn up some letters in their desk that it wouldn't be healthy for them to let their wife know about, even if they were dead. So it is a convenient thing to have, male or female.

The first night I laid awake with mine I told her all about stuffing my insteps to make them look aristocratic and kissing Lord Byron's pic-

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ture good night every night, which I *never* would have done in the daylight. At night things just seem to tell *themselves*, although you are very sorry for it the next day. Men mostly propose at night; I guess one excuse is that the girls form such beautiful optical illusions under a pink lamp shade.

Well, I told her all I knew and she told me the story of her life, which is as follows: Her name is Jean Everett, her mother's name is Mrs. Everett and her young lady aunt is named Miss Merle Arnold on her mother's side. They are down here to spend the summer and are boarding close to our house. There is another boarder in the house for the summer which is named Mr. St. John, and Jean says if they had named him Angel instead of just Saint it wouldn't be any too good for him. And, if I do say it myself, he is as beautiful as a mermaid. Mammy Lou says he's got a "consumpted look," but to other people it is the height of poetry.

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Jean is so full of poetical thoughts herself that her stomach is very much upset and nothing but chocolate candy will agree with her. She has promised the next time she stays all night with me she will tell me the one great secret of her life (as if I hadn't guessed it the minute she called Mr. St. John's name.) She hasn't got much appetite and the smell of honeysuckle fills her with strange longings. She says she either wants to write a great book or live in a marble palace or marry a duke, she can't tell exactly which. But the poor girl is cruelly misunderstood by her family, because her mother is giving her rhubarb to break it out on her.

Jean came over early this morning and said she just had to talk to somebody about how spiritual Mr. St. John looked last night with his fair hair and white vest on.

"He looked just like a *lily*, Ann," she said, with almost tears in her eyes, and me remembering Doctor Gordon didn't laugh at her. Then,

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before I could comfort her, she had dropped down by the iris bed and was telling me the *one* great secret of her life, without waiting to stay all night and tell it in the moonlight.

“*Love* him,” she said, gathering up a handful of the purple irises, “*love him?* I’d *cook* for that man.”

I didn’t hardly know what to say in answer to this secret, which wasn’t much of a secret to me; but she didn’t wait for me to say anything for she went on telling me what big pearl buttons the white vest had on it and how Mr. St. John said “i-ther and ni-ther,” and how broken her heart was. She said she was the most sinful girl on earth, for she believed Mr. St. John was about to get struck on her Aunt Merle, and here she was winning him away from her!

I asked her if he had ever said anything about loving her and she said why, no; no well-behaved girl would let a man say such a thing to her until they had been acquainted at least a month, and they hadn’t been knowing each

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other but twenty-two days. I then asked her if he had made any sign that he would like to say things to her when the month was out, but she said that was just where the trouble came in. She *knew* she could win his love if she once got a *chance* at him; but no matter how early she got up of a morning to go and sit with him on the porch before breakfast, which was a habit of his, he would just ask her how far along she was in geography and if she didn't think algebra was easier than arithmetic, and such insulting questions as that. Then he would pace up and down the floor until her Aunt Merle came out of the front door, acting like a *caged bridegroom!* She said, oh, it would put her in her grave if she didn't get her mind off of it for a little while! Then she asked me if we were going to have strawberries for dinner and said she would run over and ask her mother if she could stay.

This morning Jean asked me if I remembered what Hamlet in Shakespeare said about *words*.

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I told her I had just got as far as *The Merchant of Venice* and was getting ready to start on *Hamlet* when Miss Wilburn left. She said well, he remarked "words, words, words," but he didn't know what he was talking about. She said he meant that there wasn't anything in mere words, but he was badly fooled, for there was a heap in them.

I told her yes, there was something in words, for I had read of a beautiful Irish poet once that just couldn't think of a word that he wanted to finish up a song with. He studied over it for about three months, when all of a sudden one day his carriage upset and bumped his head so hard that he thought of it.

Jean said that was a *beautiful* story and she would be willing to have her head bumped once for *every* word, if she could just write poetry that would touch one cold heart that she knew of.

I said well, how on earth did all this talk about words come up, and she told me that all

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her future happiness depended upon the meaning of just one word. Then she went on to tell me that this morning she had seen her Aunt Merle on the porch talking to Mr. St. John; so she slipped around to the end of the porch like I showed her how to do when there was anything interesting going on; and she had heard him tell Miss Merle that she mustn't "condemn the precipitation, but rather consider how he *could* do otherwise." Then he had made use of a word that she never heard of before in her life. It was *pro-pin-qui-ty*; and Miss Merle's face had turned as red as tomatoes when he said it. She said if it was a love word she was ready to commit suicide of a broken heart, but if it was a *hateful* word and they were quarreling, then there was great hopes for her. We looked it up, but the dictionary man didn't explain it hardly a bit. Finally I told Jean as it was spelled so much like *In-i-qui-ty* maybe they meant the same thing, and she went home feeling much easier in her mind.

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I'm in such a writable mood to-night that I don't know what to begin on, and I reckon I'll know less about where to stop. Mammy Lou started us at it, for her mind never runs on a thing except loving and marrying. She asked me early this morning if we wasn't going to try our fortunes to-day by looking down into a well at noon, this being May Day. Me, being of an affectionate nature, of course liked the idea, so I ran right over to tell Jean, who was simply carried away. She said it would be such a relief to her to see the face of her beloved reflected in the well; but I told her that to see *any* face would mean that she was going to get a husband, which a girl ought to be thankful for, and not get her heart set on any particular one. While we were planning about it Miss Merle came in and asked what it was. When we told her she smiled and asked if she was too old and grown-up to join in the game, but I told her no indeed, she didn't act at all like a grown person. I really think Miss Merle is very fascinating.

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Even her name, Merle, sounds soft and sweet to me, like a right fresh marshmallow.

Now, naturally anybody would be excited to think that they were going to see their husband's face at twelve o'clock in the bottom of a well, and it seemed to us that the time never would come. There is a very old well down in our pasture close by the fence which ain't covered over, and a lot of lilac bushes right around it in bloom, so you couldn't well pick a prettier spot for your future husband's face.

Mammy Lou said we better all wear white sunbonnets, because they become you so, and Miss Merle looked awful pretty in hers, with her dark, curly hair.

I don't know how the news that we were going to do such a thing ever got spread, for we didn't tell hardly a soul—just mother and mammy and Mrs. Everett and the lady they board with and her married daughter, which all promised that they wouldn't ever tell, but somebody else found out about it, as you shall see.

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We collected at the pasture gate at exactly a quarter to twelve and the minute the first whistle blew we raced to the well, for we were all anxious to see our husband if he was there. They said for me to go first as it was my well, but I said no, they must go first, because they were company, but Miss Merle said for me to look first, then she and Jean would look at the same time, as their husbands wouldn't mind reflecting together, being that they were kin.

My heart was beating so that I was about to smother, but I pulled my bonnet down low over my eyes to shut out any view except what was in the well, like mammy told us to do, and leaned 'way over and looked.

Now, up to this time, my diary, whenever I have mentioned Sir Reginald I was kinder half joking, and never really thought he would come to pass, as so many things in this life don't; but now I believe it's *so*. While I couldn't make out his face very well and don't know whether his eyes are blue or brown, and his nose Roman or

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not, still there was something glittering and shining in that well which I firmly believe was meant to be Sir Reginald de Beverley and his *coat of mail!*

They were punching me and saying, "Ann, do you see anything?" till I couldn't tell whether he smiled at me or not; but I remembered my manners even on such a critical occasion, so I got up and let them look.

They commenced pulling down their bonnets like I did and leaned over the well. I was on the other side, facing the lilac bushes—and in less time than it takes me to write it, me being in a hurry and my pencil short, there was something happening that made me feel like I was in a fairy tale. I saw those lilac bushes move and the next thing I knew there was Mr. St. John. Not in a white vest, it's true, but looking beautiful enough, even in the daylight. He motioned to me not either to speak or move, though I couldn't have done either one, being almost paralyzed between seeing him and Sir Reginald

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at the same time. He tipped up right easy and leaned over the well, opposite to Miss Merle.

When Jean saw his image in the well she gave one overjoyed scream and leaned farther over to see more.

“Oh, it’s Mr. St. John,” she called out to her Aunt Merle, her voice sounding very deep and hollow, but joyful. “It’s *Mr.* St. John! *He’s* going to be my future husband!”

He and Miss Merle were about to kill themselves laughing, for Miss Merle had seen him from the first; but when Jean looked up and saw him he looked at her so sweet that you felt like you could forgive him anything he was to do, even the “i-ther and ni-ther.”

“I’d like to accommodate you, Jean,” he said, laughing and catching her hand with an affectionate look, although he is usually very timid and dignified, “but the fact is—may I tell, Merle?” And the way *he* said “Merle” sounded like a whole *box* of marshmallows.

Miss Merle smiled at him and then he told

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Jean if she would every *bit* as soon have it that way, he would be her uncle instead of her future husband.

I was so afraid that she would faint or die right there in the pasture that I told them I heard mother calling me and ran as hard as I could tear.

She came over this afternoon to tell me all about it and was feeling strong enough to eat a small basket of wild goose plums.

“Oh, it was a terrible shock at first,” she said, stopping long enough to spit out a seed, “but the *minute* he said *uncle* my love changed. Why, Ann, an uncle is an *old* person, almost like a grandpa! Anyway, they’ve promised that I shall be in the wedding, dressed in a pair of beautiful white silk stockings.”

CHAPTER X

IT ain't any easy matter to keep a diary with a baby in the house, especially if he's at the *watchable* age, although he's such a darling one that you don't begrudge him the trouble he makes. Before you more than get a sentence set down you have to drop everything and run and jerk the palm-leaf fan out of his hands, which he takes great pleasure in ramming the handle of down his throat. Then he eats great handfuls of the Virginia Creeper leaves if you leave him on the porch for a minute by himself. And at times he won't be satisfied with anything on earth unless you turn up the mattress and let him beat on the bed-springs, which I consider a smart idea and think Cousin Eunice ought to write out and send to a

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mazagine under the head of "Hints for Tired Mothers." But I say it again, there don't any of us begrudge him these many little ways, although it's hard to be literary with them; for when he smiles and "pat-a-cakes" and says "Ah! ah!" you don't care if you never write another line.

Mother made Cousin Eunice turn over the raising of him to her the very day she got here, for everybody knows, my diary, how a lady that's ever raised a baby feels toward a lady that's just owned one a few months.

"No *flannel* on this precious child!" mother almost screamed the minute we got him off the train and started to drive home. "Why, it's positively flying in the face of Providence to leave his band off this early!" And mother looked at Cousin Eunice like she had done it a-purpose.

"Oh, Aunt Mary, please don't," poor Cousin Eunice said like she was about to cry. "For the last eleven months there has been scarcely

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a thing discussed in my presence but *belly-bands!*" (There weren't any men around.) "It seems if a woman ever has one baby her thoughts never travel away from flannel bands afterward!"

"But pneumonia! Cholera infantum! Teething!" Mother kept on, hugging Waterloo close.

"That's what *twenty-three* of my neighbors tell me," Cousin Eunice answered, "then nineteen others say it's cruel to keep him all swathed up in this hot weather, while eleven said to leave it off until his second summer, and fifteen said for me to——"

"What does Doctor Gordon say?" mother asked, to change the subject off of the neighbors.

"He said, '*Damn those old women!*'" Cousin Eunice told her, which made her jump, although it looks like she has lived with father long enough not to.

Right after dinner they started up the talk

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again. Should Waterloo be banded or disbanded? They hadn't talked long when Mammy Lou came into the room holding something under her apron. She looked kinder mad and dignified at mother and Cousin Eunice because they hadn't asked her for *her* say-so about bands.

"If it's entirely respectable for me to speak before I'm spoke to," she commenced, her voice very proud and haughty, "I'd like for you all to pay *me* some mind. There's *two* subjec's I'm well qualified to speak about and *one* is babies. Ain't I done raised a bushel basket full o' little niggers, let alone that one beautiful little white angel that's the peartest and sweetest of any in the state?"

Which made me feel very much embarrassed with modestness.

"We all know that you made a good job of Ann," Cousin Eunice said very pleasantly just to pacify her. "What would you suggest about little Rufus?"

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"*These!*" Mammy Lou said, drawing her hand out from her apron like a man on the stage dressed in velvet does his sword and we saw a string of speckled beans.

"Job's Tears," mammy told the company. "Ther ain't no need to worry about bands when you've got *these!* Ther nudder has been a child that cut teeth hard from Adam on down if his ma put a string of these aroun' his neck——"

Cousin Eunice was beginning to say something nice when father spoke up and asked mammy who it was that put them around Adam's neck, which made her mad.

"Poke all the fun you want to," she said, "but the time *will* come that you-all 'ull be thankful to me for savin' these for Mr. Rufe's baby, or I'm a blue-gum nigger!"

Lots of times I take Waterloo over to make Jean a visit, which is easy on everybody, for the folks over there love babies so that they relieve me of his weight the minute I get there and leave me and Jean free to do whatever we

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want to. She is teaching me what she calls "artistic handwriting" now, using an actress' signature for a copy. It consists of some very large letters and some very small ones, like the charts in an eye-doctor's office that he uses to see if you're old enough to wear spectacles.

Cousin Eunice has time now with so many folks to help tend to Waterloo to slip off every morning and go to a quiet place down in the yard with her paper and pencil and compose on a book she's trying to write. Before she was ever married she wanted to write a book, and if you once get *that* idea into your head even marrying won't knock it out.

Cousin Eunice says I'm such a kindred spirit that I don't bother her when I go along too, but she has a dreadful time at her own house trying to write. She don't more than get her soul full of beautiful thoughts about tall, pale men and long-stemmed roses and other things like that before a neighbor drops in and talks for three hours about the lady around the cor-

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ner's husband staying out so late at night and what her servants use to scrub the kitchen sink. I told her I knew one lady that hated so for folks to drop in that she unscrewed the front doorbell, so she couldn't hear them ring, but she got paid back for it next day by missing the visit of a rich relation.

Rufe and Cousin Eunice may live to be thankful for the string of Job's Tears, but I reckon to-night Miss Merle and Mr. St. John wish that Job never shed a tear in the shape of a bean, for they were what a grown person would call "the indirect cause" of a quarrel between them. It's queer that such a little thing as Waterloo should be picked out by Fate to break up a loving couple, but he did; although I ain't saying that it was *altogether* his fault.

This afternoon I took him over to Jean's and we were having a lovely time out on their front-porch, enjoying stories of her former sweet-hearts and a bottle of stuffed olives. She told

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me about one she had last winter that she was deeply attached to. She would see him at a big library in the city where she loves to read every afternoon. She saw him there one time and got to admiring him so much that she would go up there every afternoon at the time she knew he would be there and get a book and sit opposite him, making like she was reading, but really feasting her eyes on his lovely hair and scholarly looking finger-nails.

“I never got acquainted with him, so never learned his name,” she told me, jabbing her hat-pin deep down into the olive bottle, like little Jack Horner, “but he was always reading about ‘The Origin of the Aryan Family,’ so I’m sure he was a young Mr. Aryan.”

I told her I certainly had heard the Aryan family spoken of, I couldn’t remember where, but she said oh, yes, she knew it was a swell family and that I must have read about it in the pink sheet of the Sunday paper.

Then she said she had a souvenir of him,

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and, as I'm crazy about souvenirs, I begged her to go and get it, hoping very much that it was a miniature on ivory set in diamonds.

"What is it?" I kept asking her, as she was trying to get her legs untangled out of her petticoats to get up and go after it; we were sitting flat down on the floor, which sometimes tangles your heels dreadfully. Finally she got up, tearing a piece of trimming out, which she did up in a little ball and threw away, so her mother would lay it on the washerwoman when she saw the tear.

"*Ashes;*" she told me, kinder whispery, after she had reached the front door, for she was afraid somebody would hear; but it gave me a terrible feeling and I wondered how she got them away from his relations and whether she had to go to the graveyard in the middle of the night to do it or not. I comforted myself with the thought that they would be in a prettily ornamented urn, even if they were ashes, for I had read about urns in Roman history; but

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shucks! when she got back it wasn't a thing but a pink chewing-gum wrapper full of cigar ashes that he had thrown away one day right in front of her as they were going up the steps to the library.

Before I had time to tell her how disappointed I was there came a picture-taking man up the front walk and asked us to let him take Waterloo's picture for some post-cards. If you were pleased you could buy them and if you weren't you didn't have to. But he knew of course there wouldn't any lady be hard-hearted enough not to buy a picture of her own baby.

Nothing could have delighted us more, unless the man had said take *our* pictures; and Jean remarked that Waterloo ought to be fixed up funny to correspond with the string of beads around his neck. She ran and got a pair of overalls that belonged to the lady she boards with's little boy and we stuffed Waterloo in. He looked too cute for anything and we was

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just settling him down good for the picture when Jean spoke up again and said oh, wasn't it a pity that he didn't have any hair on his head, as hair showed up so well in a picture. I told her it was aristocratic not to have hair when you're a baby, on your head. She said shucks! how could anything connected with a baby be aristocratic? This made me mad and I told her maybe she didn't know what it was to be aristocratic. She said she did, too; it was aristocratic to have a wide front porch to your house and to eat sweetbreads when you were dining in a hotel. I was thinking up something else to say when the picture-taking man said hurry up. There is a great deal more to this, but it is so late that I'm going to leave the rest for to-morrow night. Anyhow maybe my grandchildren will be more interested to go on and read, for magazine writers always chop their stories off at the most particular spot, when they are going to be continued, just where you are holding your breath, so as to

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make you buy the next number of the magazine.

Well, in just a minute after we were talking about the hair Jean said she knew the *very* thing! Her Aunt Merle was up on the far back porch drying her hair that she had just finished washing, and had left her rat lying on her bureau. She had seen it there when she went to get the ashes of Mr. Aryan. She said it was a lovely rat, which cost five dollars, all covered with long brown hair; and she said it was just the thing to set off Waterloo's bald head fine. So she ran and got it and we fixed it on. He looked exactly like a South Sea Islander which you see in the side show of an exposition by paying twenty-five cents extra. (An exposition is a large place which makes your feet nearly kill you.) But the picture-man said he looked mighty cute and snapped him in several splendid positions.

Now, if Mr. St. John had just stayed where

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he belonged this would be the end of the story and I could go on to bed to-night, without having to sit up by myself writing till the clocks strike eleven, which is a lonesome hour when everybody else is in bed.

But Mr. St. John didn't stay away; and, as all the bad things that happen are laid on Fate, I reckon she was the one that put it into his head to walk up those front steps and on to that porch before we noticed him, for we were trying our best to get Waterloo back into citizen's clothes.

He stopped to see what it was we were scrambling over, and when he saw that it was alive he threw up his nice white hands and remarked "Heavens!" which is the elegant thing to say when you're surprised, although father always says, "Jumping Jerusalem!"

"What *is* the thing?" he asked, after he had looked again. Jean told him why it was just the lady over at our house's little baby dressed up. Then he asked what that horrible woolly

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growth on his head was, which tickled Jean mightily. Then, just for the fun of seeing what he *would* say when he was very much surprised, she jerked it off and held it up, like the executioner did Mary, Queen of Scot's head, which gives me a crinkly pain up and down my back even to read about. The rat was just pinned together and set up on Waterloo's little noggin, so Jean jerked it off and explained to Mr. St. John that it was her Aunt Merle's rat. *I* always knew it wasn't any good idea to talk about such things before a man that was a person's lover; but I thought Jean had had more experience in such things than I had and it wasn't my place to interrupt her.

I am sure Mr. St. John felt like saying "Jumping Jerusalem" when Jean told him that the woolly growth was the rat of his beloved. If I was writing a novel I'd say that he "recoiled with horror," that is, he jumped back quickly, like he didn't want it to bite him, and sat down.

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“*Imagine!*” he kept saying to himself like he was dazed; “imagine a man *touching* the thing! *Kissing* the thing!”

I thought, of course, he was talking about Waterloo, and was ready to speak up and say, “I thank you, Mr. St. John, my little cousin is not to be called a ‘*thing*,’” but Jean spoke first.

“What would you want to kiss *this* for?” she asked him. “’Tain’t any harm to kiss in the *mouth* after you’re engaged, is it?”

We might have been standing there asking him such questions as that till daylight this morning for all the answers we got out of him, but while he sat looking at us and we were trying to squirm Waterloo’s little fat legs out of the overalls and him kicking and crying, Miss Merle walked out on the porch. She saw Mr. St. John first, as you would naturally expect an engaged girl to do, and started toward him, but just then she saw us and stopped.

“Why, what on earth are you children doing

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with my rat down here?" she asked, not looking a bit ashamed.

We told her what we had been doing with it and she just laughed and said well, it was too hot to wear the thing on such a day anyway, although she had looked for it high and low.

All the time we were talking Mr. St. John looked at her in the most amazed way, like he expected to see her appear looking like a Mexican dog, but was greatly surprised to see her with such a nice lot of home-made hair. If he had had any sense he would admire her all the more for not telling a story about that rat; for I've seen a thousand young ladies in my life that wouldn't have owned up to it for a hundred dollars, but would have made their little niece out a story and then boxed her ears in private. I hope when I get grown I won't be a *liarable* young lady, although it does seem like they're twice as quick to get married as an honest one.

He didn't act with good sense, though, for they soon got to talking and we could hear

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what they said (although we were out of sight) for they were high-toned remarks.

He said he *hated* shams, and she said well, *that* wasn't any sham for every blowsy-headed girl wears them nowadays and everybody knows it, even the poets and novel-writers that always make their heroines so fuzzy-headed. Then she called him a prig and he said something back at her and she gave him back the ring, which was a brave thing to do, it being a grand diamond one with Mizpath marked in it.

Of course the next thing that happens after an engagement is broken is for it to get mended again. All day we have hung around Miss Merle to see just when she gets the ring back again, but up to a late hour to-night, as the newspapers say about the election returns, there was nothing doing. Oh, it does seem a pity that they would let the news go down to their children or be put on their tombstones that their lives were blighted on account of a rat!

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I've neglected you, my diary, for the last few days because my mind has been on other things. It rained all the next day after I wrote last and I couldn't go over to Jean's, which put me out greatly. I finally thought about sending a note by Lares and Penates and paid them in chicken livers, me being so uneasy in my mind that I didn't have any appetite for them, and knowing that they loved them enough to fight over them any time.

I told Jean in the note to fix some kind of signal like Paul Revere to let me know the minute the ring got back to Miss Merle, for I was deeply worried, me and Waterloo and Jean being to blame for it. Then, too, it is dangerous for an engagement ring to stay returned too long for it might get given to another girl.

Jean was delighted with my note and said she would certainly hang a lantern in the garget only she never could undo the chimney of a lantern to light it, and never saw a lady person that could; but it was a romantic idea.

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So she thought hanging a white towel in the window that faces our house for a signal would do very well, and I could know by that if it kept on raining and I couldn't get over there.

Well, I was so interested that I hardly moved from that side of the house all day, until it got so dark that I couldn't see the house, much less a towel. So I went sorrowfully to bed. The next morning I was delighted to see that I was going to get rewarded for my watching, for *long* before breakfast I discovered a white thing, and it was waving from Mr. St. John's window, which made it all the surer in my mind.

Although it was cakes and maple syrup I didn't waste much time over breakfast, but grabbed my hat and started for Jean's.

Miss Merle was on the front porch and I noticed Mr. St. John just inside the hall, looking like he would like to come out, but was waiting for her to give him lief. She looked up at me quick.

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"Why, Ann," she said, "what are you in such a big hurry about?"

I've often noticed, my diary, that when people are in a hurry and can't think of anything else to tell they tell the *truth*, although they don't intend to. It was that way with me.

"Oh, I'm *so* glad you and Mr. St. John have made up!" I told her, fanning hard with my hat, for I was all out of breath.

She looked very strange and asked me, "What?" and so I told her over again. Just then Mr. St. John came out and asked who was that talking about him behind his back. He looked pitiful, although he tried to look pleasant, too.

Jean heard me talking and came running down the stairs just in time to hear me telling it over again to Miss Merle.

"Why, there ain't a *sign* of a towel hanging out the window," she told me, looking very much surprised and me greatly mortified. "You must have dreamed it!"

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Miss Merle asked her then what she was talking about and it was their turn to look surprised when she told them.

I told them I had felt awfully bad about the rat, because me and Waterloo was partly responsible, and they kinder smiled. But I couldn't let them think that I had *made up* the towel story, so I told them if they would come around on the side that faces our house I'd show them. Mr. St. John and Miss Merle looked at each other very peculiar and he said:

"It's a shame to disappoint the children!" which she didn't make any answer to, but she looked *tolerable*, agreeable. Then I begged them to come on around to Mr. St. John's window and I could show them I wasn't any story.

"My window!" he said, looking surprised; then his face turned red. "Why, it must have been my er—*shirt* I hung there last night to dry after I was out in that shower!"

We couldn't help from laughing, all of us; but he laughs like the corners of his mouth ain't

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used to it. That is one bad thing about a dignified man—they're always afraid to let their mouth muscles stretch.

Miss Merle caught me and Jean by the hand with a smile and said let's go and see what that signal looked like that brought Ann over in such a hurry. "A shirt is a highly proper thing to discuss—since Thomas Hood," she said as we started down the steps.

"Pray don't," he said, the corners of his mouth wrinkling again, but his face just covered with red. "I'll be the happiest man on earth, Merle, if you'll just forgive me for my asininity; but—*do* come back!— For it's an *undershirt!*"

CHAPTER XI

“COME on in, the egg-nog’s fine,” Rufe called out to us as we came up the walk to the side gate this morning, a beautiful Christmas morning, after a long tramp down through the wood lot and up the ravine.

“Come on out, the ozone’s finer,” Cousin Eunice sang back at him; then stopped still, leaned against the gate-post and looked up at the mistletoe hanging in the trees all about.

“You can get ozone three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, egg-nog but one!” he hollered again, but I saw him set his glass down and start to swing Waterloo up on his shoulder. No matter how long they have been married you can always find Rufe wanting to be where Cousin Eunice is, and vice versa.

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Long ago anybody reading in my diary would have seen that mother is the kind of woman who loves to mother anything that needs it, from a little chicken with the gapes to a college professor out in a storm without his rubbers; and the latest notion she has taken up is to see that Miss Martha Claxton, one of the teachers in a girls' school that has been opened up near here, shall not get homesick during the week-ends. We all like her, Mammy Lou even saving the top of the churning every Friday to make cottage cheese for her; and Cousin Eunice said she knew she was a kindred spirit as soon as she said she could eat a bottle of olives at one sitting and *loved* Baby Stuart's picture. So we invited her to go walking with us this morning and Cousin Eunice told her all about her courting in the ravine.

I also knew about her *peculiarity*, which Cousin Eunice didn't; but I didn't like to mention it, for Miss Claxton had smashed her eyeglasses all to pieces yesterday and was wearing

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an embroidered waist and a string of coral, so instead of looking intellectual, as she usually does, she looked just like other girls. But the men of our family all laugh at her behind her back and call her "The Knocker," because she carries a hammer with her on all her rambles instead of a poetry book, and knocks the very jiblets out of little rocks to see if they've got any fossils on their insides. In other words, she is a geologist. A person ought not to blame her though until she has had time to explain to them that her father was professor of it and had a chair in a college when she was born. So he taught her all about rocky subjects when she was little, and she's crazy about it. Still, I would rather be with a person that is crazy about geology than one that isn't crazy at all. I hate *medium* people. But, as I have said, we are all very fond of her, although she has never done anything since I've known her that would be worth writing about in this book, not having any lover; so it has been lying on the shelf all

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covered with dust ever since Jean left. Sometimes I think I'll never find another Jean!

To get back to my subject, though, this morning *was* lovely—cool enough to keep your hair in curl (if you were a grown lady) and warm enough to make your cheeks pink. Cousin Eunice said she *couldn't* go back into the house while the sunshine was so golden, so we leaned our elbows on the fence and Miss Claxton examined a handful of pebbles she had picked up on our walk. Pretty soon Rufe came out with Waterloo on his shoulder and in his hands a horse that can walk on wheels and a mule that can wag his head, ears, legs and tail and say, “queek, queek,” all at the same time.

“Oh, Rufe, isn't it lovely?” Cousin Eunice said, looking away toward the hills and sighing that half-sad sigh that rises in you when you see something beautiful and can't eat it nor drink it nor *squeeze* it.

“Isn't what lovely, your complexion?” he an-

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swered, just to tease her, for Rufe loves the outdoors as much as any of us, and if Waterloo takes after his mother and father both, he will never sleep in anything more civilized than a wigwam.

“Don’t joke,” she said. “It’s too beautiful—and too fleeting! Just think, in another week we’ll be back, dwelling with the rest of the fools amid the tall buildings!”

“It is everything you say,” he answered soberly, looking in the direction she pointed, and he seemed to have that happy, hurting feeling that comes to you when you look at Lord Byron’s picture, or smell lilies-of-the-valley.

“Don’t you feel light on a morning like this?” Cousin Eunice said again, still looking at the hills. “Couldn’t you do anything?”

“Anything!” he echoed. “Even push my paper to the hundred thousand mark—or carry a message to Garcia.”

“Especially the message to Garcia! Now *couldn’t* you?” she said with a bright smile. “I

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could do that myself, without even mussing up my white linen blouse!"

Miss Claxton looked up at them with a puzzled look, and Rufe and Cousin Eunice unhitched hands.

"Miss Claxton," Rufe began with a half-teasing twinkle in his eyes (I had heard father telling him a while ago about Miss Claxton being a knocker), "this little affair about the message to Garcia happened a bit this side of the Eocene age, so maybe you haven't bothered your head about it. I might explain that——"

"Nobody asked you to, sir," she said, with such a rainbow of a smile at him that I was surprised. If she could smile like that at a married man what would she do at a single one? "I know a lot more things than I look to—with my glasses on! That carrying the message to Garcia was a brave thing to do, even aside from the risks. It is heroic to do the thing at hand. I'm trying to learn that lesson myself. I'm being a schoolmarm and wearing glasses to

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look like one, instead of following my natural bent in the scientific field," she wound up, still smiling.

"What's your ambition?" Cousin Eunice said, looking at her wonderingly.

"Knowing what's to be known about Primitive Man," Miss Claxton answered. "He's the only man I ever cared a copper cent about!"

"Mine's writing a book that will make me famous overnight, I don't want to wait to awake some morning and find myself so," Cousin Eunice said, stooping over to set Waterloo's horse up on his wheels, for he would come un-fixed every time Waterloo would yank him over a gravel; and all the time we were talking he kept up a chorus of "Fick horte! Fick horte!"

Rufe said his ambition was never to see an editor's paste-pot again, and he was turning to me to ask what mine is when the conversation was interrupted. I was glad that it was, for I should hate to tell them just what mine is. Somehow it is mostly about Sir Reginald de

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Beverley, and I'm old enough now to know that he may not be an English lord after all and dress in a coat of mail. He may be just a plain young doctor or lawyer, and we'll have to live in a cottage (only excuse me from a flat, I wouldn't live in a flat with Lord Byron) and maybe we'll just have chicken on Sunday. But as long as he has brown eyes and broad shoulders and lovely teeth I shall manage to do with crackers and peanut butter through the week. A woman will do *anything* for the man she loves.

But I didn't have to tell them all this, for just then we heard the gate click and saw our friend, Mr. Gayle, coming up the walk.

"There comes old Zephyr," Rufe said with a laugh. "It was the biggest lie on earth to name him Gayle. Even Breeze would have been an exaggeration."

"He's awfully smart," I told Rufe, for I hate to have my friends laughed at. "I know you and Julius joke about him on account of his

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gentle ways and broad-brimmed hats! Father says it's better to have something *under* your hat than to have so much style in its looks!"

"Well, he has something under his hat," Cousin Eunice said, "and hat enough to cover twice as much. But I think those old-timey things are becoming to him!"

"What is the subject about which he knows so much?" Miss Claxton asked, following him with her eyes until Dilsey let him in at the front door.

"Heaven," Rufe answered her, "and hell. He writes deep psychological stuff for the magazines and they pay him ten cents a word for it. He must spend his dimes building model tenements, for he certainly doesn't buy new hats with them."

"What does he say about Heaven and the other place?" Miss Claxton asked, much to our surprise, for we had thought she didn't care about anything but earth.

"He says they're both in your own heart.

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The Heaven side comes up when you've done a decent job at your work—and loved your office boy as your own nephew!"

"And——" Miss Claxton kept on.

"And the hell part comes into the limelight when you've done anything mean, such as——"

"Spanking your Waterloo when the telephone bell makes you nervous—*not* when he's bad," Cousin Eunice said, gathering Waterloo up in her arms and loving him. "Him's a precious angel, and mudder's a nasty lady to him lots of times."

"Aunt Mary is sending him out here to find us," Rufe said, as we saw Mr. Gayle coming out of the dining-room door. "I hope she's filled him so full of egg-nog that we can have some fun out of him!"

He had on a Sunday-looking suit of black clothes and a soft black tie in honor of the day, and was really nice-looking as he came up toward us. And Miss Claxton threw away the last one of her pebbles, no matter what they

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had on their insides, and commenced wiping her hands vigorously with her handkerchief.

"Thank goodness!" I thought as I watched her. "I shall go straight up-stairs and wipe the dust off my diary with my petticoat!"

I reckon Rufe and Cousin Eunice both thought that Mr. Gayle and Miss Claxton had met before, for they didn't offer to introduce them, but I knew they hadn't, so I was the one that had to do it. I had forgotten how *The Ladies' Own Journal* said it ought to be done, and I was kinder scared anyway; and when I get scared I always make an idiot of myself. So I just grabbed her right hand and his right hand and put them together and said, "Mr. Gayle, *do* shake hands with Miss Claxton!"

Well, they shook hands, but the others all laughed at me. Cousin Eunice said she was sorry she didn't know they hadn't met before, or she would have introduced them. But Mr. Gayle smiled at me to keep me from feeling bad.

"Never mind," he said, "I'm sure Ann's intro-

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duction is as good as anybody's. What she lacks in form she more than makes up for in sincerity."

I thought it was nice of him to say that, but I was so embarrassed that I got away from them as soon as I could. I went out to the kitchen to see if Mammy Lou was ready to stuff the turkey. Lares and Penates were on the floor playing with two little automobiles that Julius had brought them. Mammy Lou was fixing to cut up the liver in the gravy.

"Please don't," I began to beg her, "I'll go halves with Lares and Penates if you'll give it to me!"

"You don't deserve nothin'," she said, trying to look at me and not laugh. "I seen you out thar by the side gate, aggin' 'em on! Reckon you're in your glory, now that you've got a *pair* of 'em to spy on and write it all out in that pesky little book!"

"Oh, they ain't a pair!" I told her, slicing up the liver into three equal halves.

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“They soon will be if they listen to you!”

“Never in this world! She says she never has cared for anybody but a person she calls ‘Primitive Man!’”

“Dar now! I bet he fooled her!” she said with great pleasure, for next to a funeral she likes a fooling, and she is always excited when she forgets and says “Dar now.” “If he has,” she kept on, “she’d better do the nex’ best thing and marry Mr. Gayle. He’s got as good raisin’ as ary man I ever seen, although he’s a little pore. But they’s *some* things I don’t like about fat husban’s—they can’t scratch they own back!”

I was glad to keep her mind on marrying, for I thought I’d get a chance at the gizzard too, but she watched it like she watches her trunk-key when her son-in-law’s around. I told her to go to the window and see what they were doing now, and she did it, poor old soul! When she came back the gizzard was gone, but she was so tickled that she didn’t notice it.

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“They’ve done paired off and gone down by the big tree to knock mistletoe out’n the top,” she told me, her face shining with grease and happiness. “I knowed ’twould be a match! Needn’t nuvver tell no nigger of my experience that folks is too smart to fall in love! Ever’body’s got a little *grain* o’ sense, no matter how deep it’s covered with book-learnin’.”

“Oh, they don’t have to be smart at all,” I told her, talking very fast to divert her mind from the gravy. “Father says if the back of a girl’s neck is pretty she can get married if she hasn’t sense enough to count the coppers in the contribution box.”

“An’ he tol’ the truth,” she said, stopping still with her hands on her hips like she was fixing for a long sermon. “An’ furthermore, if she’s rich she don’t need to have neither. But marryin’ for riches is like puttin’ up preserves—it looks to be a heap bigger pile beforehan’ than afterwards. An’ many a man marries a

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rich girl expectin' a automobile when he don't git nothin' but a baby buggy!"

Mr. Gayle has been coming over so early every morning since that first morning that he met Miss Claxton, and staying so late that I haven't had much time to write. I've been too busy watching. I've often heard Doctor Gordon say that diseases have a "period of incubation," but I believe that love is one disease that doesn't incubate. It just comes, like light does when you switch on the electricity. This morning Mr. Gayle came so early that Rufe went into the sitting-room and began to poke fun at him, as usual.

"Hello, old man," he said, shaking hands with him. "I'm surely glad to see that it's *you*. Thought of course when the door-bell rang so soon after breakfast that it was an enlarged picture agent!"

"No, I'm far from being an enlarged anything," the poor man said, wiping off the per-

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spiration from his forehead, for he must have walked very fast. "In fact, I'm feeling rather 'ensmalled,' as our friend, Ann, might say. I have never before so realized my utter unworthiness!"

"Bosh," Rufe said, slapping him on the shoulder in a friendly way. "Why, man, you're on to your job as well as anybody I ever saw. Why, your last article in *The Journal for the Cognoscenti* made me give up every idea of the old-fashioned Heaven I'd hoped for—a place where a gas bill is never presented, and alarm clocks and society editors enter not!"

"Mr. Clayborne would have been worth his weight in platinum as court jester to some melancholy monarch in the middle ages," Miss Claxton said, looking up from her crochet work which mother is teaching her and Cousin Eunice to do, because it has come back into style, to smile at Mr. Gayle.

"I'm not what Ann calls 'smart'!" he said in answer to her, "but I remember enough history

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to know that the other name for jester is fool. I shan't stay where people call me such names!" So he got up and went out, which gave Cousin Eunice and Waterloo and me an excuse to go too. So we left the lovers alone.

"Well, he's what I call a damn fool," Rufe said in a whisper as soon as the door was closed so they couldn't hear. "Coming over here every few minutes in the day, 'totin' a long face,' as mammy says, and hasn't got the nerve to say boo to a goose!"

"Saying boo to a goose wouldn't help his suit any," Cousin Eunice said; "besides, well-regulated young people don't get engaged in three days!"

"What ill-regulated young people you and I must have been!" Rufe said, then dodged Waterloo's ball which she threw at him, saying what a *story!* It was nearly two weeks before they got engaged.

"I advocate getting engaged in two hours when people are as much in love as those two

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we've just left. Gayle hasn't red blood enough in him to stain a *chigoe's undershirt!*"

Hasn't anything happened worth writing about until to-day, but it has been happening so thick ever since morning that my backbone is fairly aching with thrills. And I'm *tired!* Oh, mercy! But I'm going to stay awake to-night until I get it all written out even if I have to souse my head in cold water, or rouse up Waterloo.

Right after breakfast this morning Mr. Gayle happened to see Cousin Eunice go into the parlor by herself to crochet some extra hard stitches, and so he went in after her and said he would like to have a little talk with her if she didn't mind. Dilsey had left the window up when she finished dusting, which I was very glad to see, for I was in my old place on the porch. He told her he supposed he was the confoundedest ass on earth, but she said oh no, she was sure he wasn't so bad as that! Then he

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plunged right into the subject and said he was madly in love and didn't know how to tell it. Would she please help him out?

"Oh, don't mind that," she answered kindly. "All earnest lovers are awkward. The Byronic ones are liars!"

He said he knew she would understand and help him with her valued advice!— But, just *what* was he to say? And *when* was he to say it?

She told him she thought it would be a psychological moment to-night, the last night of the year, and they would all be going their different ways on the morrow. It would be very romantic to propose then, say on the stroke of twelve, or just whenever he could get himself keyed up to it. He said oh, she was the kindest woman in the world. She had taken such a load off his heart! He thought it would be a fine idea to propose just on the stroke of midnight—somehow he imagined the clock striking would give him courage! Oh, he felt so much better for having told somebody!

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I felt that it would be a weight off my heart if I could tell somebody too, and just then I spied Rufe holding Waterloo up to see the turkeys down by the big chicken coop. I didn't waste a second.

"Oh, Rufe, you'll be surprised!" I said, all out of breath, and he turned around and looked thrilled. "Mr. Gayle is *red-bloodier* than you think!" Then I told him all about it. "Now aren't you sorry you called him a d—— fool?" I wasn't really minding about the cuss word, for Rufe isn't the kind of a man that says things when he's mad. He's as apt to say 'damn' when he's eating ice-cream as at any other time.

Rufe was delighted to hear that it was going to happen while they were still here to see it; and we went right back to the house and planned to sit up with Cousin Eunice and see them after they came out of the parlor on the glad New Year. Julius and Marcella were coming over to sit up with us anyhow to watch it in, so it wouldn't be hard to do.

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Well, mother put enough fruit cake and what goes with it out on the dining-table to keep us busy as long as we could eat, but along toward ten o'clock we got *so* sleepy (being just married people and me) that Julius said let's run the clock up two hours. Marcella said no, that would cause too much striking at the same time, but she said if *something* didn't happen to hurry them up and put us out of our misery we would all be under the table in another five minutes. We were all so sleepy that everything we said sounded silly, so when a bright idea struck me it took some time to get it into their heads.

"Rufe's typewriter!" I said, jumping up and down in my joy, so it waked them up some just to look at me. "The bell on it can go exactly like a clock if you slide the top thing backwards and forwards right fast. I've done it a million times to amuse Waterloo!"

They said they knew I'd make a mess of it if I tried such a thing, but I told them if they took that view of what a person could do they

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never would be encouraged to try to do things. I knew I *could* do it! Marcella said then for Rufe to place the typewriter close up to the parlor door, and they would all go out on the front porch to keep the lovers from hearing them laugh. So out they all filed.

Well, it was an exciting moment of my life when I was sliding that thing backwards and forwards and thinking all sorts of heroic thoughts, but I gritted my teeth and didn't look up until I had got the twelve strokes struck. Then I went out on the front porch right easy and sat down by the others. Julius tucked his big coat around me and we all sat there a little while, laughing and shivering and shaking until I felt that I'd never had such a good time in my life! Then somebody whispered let's go in—and *then* the unexpected happened.

We heard a sound in the parlor close back of us and the *first* thing we knew there was Mr. Gayle raising the window that opens on to the porch, and he and Miss Claxton came over and

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looked out into the night. They couldn't see us if we sat still, close up against the wall; and it seemed that none of us could budge to save our lives!

It was a lovely moonlight night, clear and cold, that always reminds me of the night Washington Irving reached Bracebridge Hall (I just love it), and so he put his arm around her, Mr. Gayle I mean, not Washington Irving, and his voice was so clear and firm and happy that we all knew he had been accepted.

"Bid good morrow to the New Year, my love," he said and kissed her on the lips a long, long time. "There has been created for me this night not only a new year, but a new *Heaven* and——"

"And a new *earth*," she finished up softly, and they closed the window down.

"I hope she won't take her little hammer and knock on her new earth to see if it has petrified wiggle tails in it," Rufe said, after we had filed back into the house and moved the typewriter

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away from the door. But his voice was solemn when he said it, and we all felt like *puppy dogs* for being out there. And nobody said another word about staying up to see how they looked when they came out of the parlor.

The next day everybody made like they were very much surprised at the way it had turned out except Mammy Lou. She looked as happy when Miss Claxton told us the news as if she had got herself engaged again.

"You were right after all, mammy," Cousin Eunice told her. "In spite of all Miss Claxton's scientific knowledge she has preferred a *man* to a career!"

"An' shows her good sense, too," mammy answered, her old brown face running over with smiles, like molasses in the sunshine. "A man's a man, I can tell *you*; and a career's a *mighty pore thing to warm your feet against* on a cold night!"

CHAPTER XII

APRIL is here! Jean and April together! No wonder I haven't any sense! "And the rain it raineth every day," but for just a little while at a time, and the mud smells so good afterward that you don't care. The warm air comes blowing through my window so early every morning and puts such sad, happy thoughts into my head that I have to get up and wake Jean. Then we dress and go out into the side yard, where I try to find a calecanthus in bloom that is really sweet enough to go in front of Lord Byron's picture. And I try to make Jean listen while I tell her all my sad, happy thoughts, that's what I invited her down here for, but she hardly ever listens.

"Isn't everything lovely?" I asked her this

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morning, after we had tiptoed through the house and out to the side porch. "And doesn't April just remind you of a right young girl, about seventeen years old, with hair made out of sunshine, and cheeks made of peach-blossoms; and eyes made out of that patch of blue sky over Mrs. West's big barn?"

That patch of sky over Mrs. West's barn takes up a heap of my time on summer afternoons when I lie close to the windows and read. It is so deep and far-off looking that I get to dreaming about Italy, and I call it the place where "Tasso's spirit soars and sings." I learned this long ago out of the Fifth Reader, and I don't know what else Tasso did besides soaring and singing.

But Jean wasn't listening to me. She had reached out and gathered a bunch of snowballs and was shaking the night before's rain off them.

"Oh, Ann," she said, "don't they remind you of willow plumes? And don't you wish we were

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old enough to wear *them* on our hats instead of sissy bows? You can get engaged in a minute if you have a willow plume on your hat!"

This seemed to remind her of something, for she spoke again the next minute.

"Say, I've never told you about Cassius, have I?"

I told her no, although I knew a little about him myself, even if he wasn't in that easy Shakespeare that Lamb wrote for kids. And she seemed to be lost in thought, so I got lost too. It never is hard for me to. I thought: "Mercy, how I have grown!" When I first commenced keeping this diary I just despised poetry, and never cared about keeping my hair tied out of my eyes, nor my hands clean. You know that age! But I soon got over that, for when you get a little bigger being in love causes you to admire poetry and also to beautify yourself. Jean and I tried very sour buttermilk (the sourer the better) to make our complexion lovely, with tansy mixed in, until it got so sour

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that mother said, "Whew! There must be a rat dead in the walls!" So we had to pour it out.

In looking over my past life it seems to me that I've been in love with somebody or other ever since that night so long ago, when Mammy Lou washed me and dressed me up in my tiny hemstitched clothes. And with such lovely heroes, too! When I was awfully little I used to be crazy about the prince that the mermaid rescued while Hans Christian Andersen stood on the beach and watched them. Then I loved Ben Hur from his pictures when I was ten, John Halifax when I was eleven, Lord Byron when I was twelve—I loved him then, do now, and ever shall, world without end, Amen! It is so much easier to love *good-looking* people than good ones! And, oh, every handsome young Moor, who ever dwelt in "the moonlit halls of the Alhambra!" Washington Irving will have a heap to answer for in the making of me. And I used to dream about "Bonny Prince Charlie," although Miss Wilburn never *could* hammer it into my head

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which one of the Stuarts he was. And *actors!* Well, I would try to make a list and write it on the fly-pages, only it might be a bad example to my grandchildren; then, too, there are so very few fly-pages.

But I started out to tell how much I've changed since I began this book, for now I not only adore poetry, I write it! Fully a quart jar full I've written since I found the first buttercup this spring. An ode to Venus, an ode to Venice, and a world of just plain odes. Mammy Lou washed out a preserves jar and put it on my desk for me to stick them in. It saves trouble for her.

Jean soon woke up out of her brown study and commenced telling about Cassius.

"I used to meet him on sunshiny mornings going to school," she said. "He was about nineteen and so pale and thin and sad-looking that I named him 'Cassius.' He walked with a crutch. One morning when the wind blew his hat off I saw that his head was very scholarly

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looking, so from that hour I began thinking of him every second of the time. That is one of the worst features about being in love, you can't get your mind off of the person, and if you *do* it's on to somebody else. Now, just last week I burnt up a great batch of Turkish candy I was trying to make on account of a person's eyes. They look at you like they're kissing you!" And she fell again into a study, not a brown one this time, just a sort of light tan.

"Whose? Cassius's?" I interrupted, shaking her to bring her to.

"Pshaw! No! I had almost forgotten about Cassius! I've never seen anything on earth to equal this other person's eyes! But, anyway, going back to finish up with Cassius, I thought *of course*, from his walking with a crutch, that he must have had a bad spinal trouble when he was a child and used to have to sit still and be a scholar, instead of chasing cats and breaking out people's window-panes like healthy boys. I

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pictured out how lonely he must feel and how he must long for a companion whose mind was equal to his; and it certainly made a changed girl of me! I burnt out gallons and gallons of electricity every night studying deep things to discuss with him when I should get to know him well."

"How did you know what kind of things he admired?" I asked, for some men like mathematics and some Dickens and you can't tell the difference by passing them on the street.

"Well, it did make a heap of extra trouble to me," she answered, sighing as tiredly as if she had been trying on coat suits all day. "As I didn't know which was his favorite subject I had to study the encyclopedia so as to be sure to hit it."

"Gee whiz!" I couldn't help saying.

"Oh, that ain't all! I wrote down a list of strange words to say to him so that he could tell at a glance that I was brilliant. They were terrific words too, from aortic and actinic

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in the a's to genuflections in the g's. That's as far as I got."

Mammy Lou called us to breakfast just then, but I could eat only four soft-boiled guinea eggs, wondering what on earth Cassius had said in reply when Jean said genuflections to him.

"Pshaw! The rest isn't worth telling," she said with a weary look, as I pulled her down on the steps right after breakfast and begged her to go on about Cassius. "It ended with a disappointment—like everything else that has a man connected with it! You're a lucky girl to be in love with Lord Byron so long, for dead men break no hearts!"

"Well, tell it!" I begged.

"Oh, it's too disgusting for words, and was a real blow to a person of my nature! The idiot didn't have spinal trouble at all, I learned it from a lady who knew his mother. He had only sprained his knee, just a plain, every-day knee, with playing basket-ball at school, which was

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all the good school ever did him, the lady said. My life has certainly been full of disillusion!"

"But, you've learned what genuflections means," I reminded her, for I think people ought to be thankful for everything they learn by experience, whether it's from an automobile or an auction house.

Pretty soon after this we heard the sound of horses' feet (when I saw who it was riding them I just couldn't say *hoofs*), so Jean and I ran to the front door. We were very glad when we saw who it was, for if it hadn't been for this couple we should have had little to talk about down here in the country except telling each other our dreams and what's good to take off freckles.

It was Miss Irene Campbell riding past our house, with Mr. Gerald Fairfax, her twin flame, in swell tan leggings that come to his knee. Miss Irene comes down here sometimes to spend the summer with her grandmother, Mrs. West. She

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used to know Mr. Fairfax so well when they were little that there were always several planks off of the fence so they could visit together without going all the way around to the gate. But he grew up and went one direction and she went another and they didn't see each other again until late last summer ; but they saw each other then, oh, so often ! And they found that they must be twin flames from the way their "temperaments accord."

I had heard Doctor Gordon say that I was of a nervous temperament and was wondering whether or not this was the kind you could have a twin flame with ; but father says the temperament that Mr. Fairfax and Miss Irene have is what makes affinities throw skilletts at each other after they've been married two weeks. But these two are not going to marry, for their friendship is of the *spirit*. They talk about incarnations and "Karma," which sounds like the name of a salve to me. Sometimes he seems to like her looks as much as her soul, and says

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she's a typical maid of Andalusia. I learned about Andalusia out of Washington Irving too, so I know he thinks she's pretty. She has some splendid traits of character, mother says, which means I reckon that she doesn't fix her hair idiotically just because other women do, nor use enough violet sachet to out-smell an automobile.

Miss Irene is very sad, both on account of her liver and her lover. Mrs. West says the books she reads are enough to give anybody liver complaint, but she has had a disappointment lately that is enough to give her appendicitis.

His name is Doctor Bynum and he's as handsome as Apollo and a bacteriologist, which is worse than a prohibitionist, for while the last-named won't let you drink whisky in peace, the other won't let you drink water in peace. Still, Miss Irene says he has the most honest brown eyes and the warmest, most comfortable-feeling hands she ever saw and she was beginning to

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love him in spite of their souls being on different planes.

“He doesn’t care for *one line* in literature,” she told mother, who is very fond of her and would like to see her settled in life. “I’ve tried him on everything from Marcus Aurelius to Gray’s *Elegy*. When I got to this last he said, ‘Good Lord! Eliminate it! It’s my business to keep folks *out* of the churchyard instead of droning ditties after they’re in it!’ Now, do you call that anything short of *savage*?”

“I call it sensible,” mother told her.

“But I hate sensible people—with *no* nonsense!”

“Oh, nonsense is necessary to the digestion,” mother answered quickly, “we all know *that*. But a little sense, now and then, it takes to pay the market men.”

“Which, being interpreted, means that you’re like grandmother. You hope I’ll marry Doctor Bynum, but you greatly fear that it will be Gerald Fairfax!”

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"All I have to say is that 'The Raven' is not a good fowl to roast for dinner," mother answered, with a twinkle in her eye, for Jean had come home from Mrs. West's the day before and said that Mr. Fairfax had been reading *The Raven* so real you were afraid it would fly down and peck your eyes out.

"Oh, Gerald and I don't believe in flesh foods!" she said loftily, then added quickly, "but I'm not going to marry *him*. Neither am I going to marry a man who calls my reincarnation theory 'bug-house talk.' I came away down here the very day after he said that, without telling him good-by or anything. And I'm just disappointed to death that he has not followed me long ago. I thought sure he would!"

"You don't deserve that he should ever think of you again," mother told her, looking as severe as she does when she tells me I'll never get married on earth unless I learn to be more tidy.

"I confess the 'conflicting doubts and opin-

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ions' *do* give me indigestion. Doctor Bynum has the most good-looking face I ever saw. And he's just lovely when he isn't perfectly hateful, and—mercy me! I think I'll get Mammy Lou to give me a spoonful of soda in a glass of warm water. I have an awful heaviness around my heart!"

This talk took place two or three days ago and we hadn't seen her again until this morning when she came riding past our house. They waved at us as they got even with our gate and turned off the main road to the little path that leads to the prettiest part of the woods.

"Jean, what would you do if Mr. Fairfax looked at you the way he looks at her?" I asked, as we sat down and fixed ourselves to watch them out of sight.

"I'd marry him quicker than you could hic-cough!" she answered, gazing after them with a yearning look. "What would you do?"

"I don't know," I told her, and I don't. "Some people seem to be happy even after they're mar-

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ried, but I think it would be nice to be like Dante and Beatrice, with no gas bills nor in-laws to bother you."

"Shoo! Well, I bet she marries him in spite of all that talk about the spirit. A spirit is all right to marry if he smells like good cigars and is *on the spot!*"

"Yes, I'm afraid Doctor Bynum has lost his chance; for a girl will love the nearest man—when the lilies-of-the-valley are in bloom."

"But I heard Mrs. West say the other day that Mr. Fairfax would make a mighty bad husband, in spite of the good looks and deep voice. He'd always forget when the oatmeal was out."

"Yes," I answered, "I heard her tell mother the other day that she would leave all she had to somebody else if she did marry him, for she believed in every married couple there ought to be at least one that had sense enough to keep the fences mended up."

"Why, that old lady's mind is as narrow as a

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ready-made nightgown," Jean exclaimed in surprise. "Why, affinities marry in every page of the pink Sunday papers!"

"But really who *does* make the living?" I asked, for I had heard mother say that that kind of folks never worked.

"The lawyer that divo'ces 'em makes the livin'," Mammy Lou said then, popping her black head out through mother's white curtains. "An' them two, if they marries, will fu'nish him with sev'al square meals! I've knowed 'em both sence they secon' summer," she said, a brown finger pointing in the direction they had gone, and a smile coming over her face, for second summers are to old women what war times are to old men, only more so. "I said it then and I say it now, he's too pore! Across the chist! He thinks too much, which ain't no 'count. It leads to *devilment!* Folks ain't got no business thinkin'—they ought to go to sleep when they're through work!"

"But his sympathy——" I started, for that's

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what Miss Irene is always talking about, but mammy interrupted me.

“Sympathy’ nothin’! How much sympathy do you reckon he’d have on a freezin’ mornin’ with wet kin’lin’ and the stovepipe done fell down? She better look out for a easy-goin’ man that ain’t carin’ ’bout nothin’ ’cept how to keep the barn full o’ corn and good shoes for seven or eight chil’en!”

Mammy Lou mostly knows what’s she talking about, but somehow I hate to think of Miss Irene with seven children. She reminds me so much of a flower. When I stop to think of it, all the girls I’ve written about remind me of flowers. Cousin Eunice is like a lovely iris, and Ann Lisbeth is like a Marechal Niel rose. Miss Cis Reeves used to look like a bright, happy little pansy, but that was before the twins were born. Now her collar to her shirtwaist always hikes up in the back and shows the skin underneath and her hat (whenever she gets a chance to put on a hat) is over one ear, and lots of

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times she looks like she wishes nobody in her family ever had been born, especially the twin that cries the loudest.

When I told Miss Irene that she reminded me of a flower, she said well, it must be the jasmine flower, or something else like a funeral, for she was as desolate as everybody was in *Ben Bolt*. (I always wondered why they didn't bury "Sweet Alice" with the rest of her family instead of in a corner obscure and alone.) I told her then just to pacify her that maybe she would feel better after she got married one way or another and stopped reading books named *The Call of*— all sorts of things, and thinking that she had to answer all the calls. Cousin Eunice says her only troubles in matrimony were stomach and eye teeth and frozen water-pipes. She never gets disgusted with life except on nights when Rufe goes to the lodge to see the third degree administered. She can even write a few articles now if she gives Waterloo a pan of water and a wash-rag to play with,

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but she says many of her brightest thoughts never were fountain-penned because he happened to squall in the midst of them.

For the last few days Mr. Fairfax has been riding around the country looking for a little cabin where he can be by himself and fish and read Schopenhauer. I imagine from what they've read before me that he must be the man who wrote the post-cards you send to newly engaged couples saying, "Cheer up! The worst is yet to come!"

Mr. Fairfax says the blue smoke will curl up from his cabin chimney at sunset and form a "symphony in color" against the green tree-tops; and he can lead the "untrammelled life." He is begging Miss Irene to go and lead it with him, I'm sure; and she's half a mind to do it, but can't bear the *thoughts* of it when she remembers Doctor Bynum's eyes and hands. Altogether the poor girl looks as uncertain as if she was walking on a pavement covered with banana peelings.

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I think the blue-smoke-cabin idea is very romantic, but when I mentioned it to Mammy Lou she got mad and jerked the skillet off the stove so suddenly that the grease popped out and burnt her finger.

“Blue smoke! Blue *blazes!*” she said, walloping her dish-rag around and around in it. “I hope that pretty critter ain’t goin’ to be took in by no such talk as that! Blue smoke curlin’! Well, *she’ll* be the one to make the fire that curls it!”

It’s a good thing that father gave me a fountain pen on my last birthday, for I should hate to write what happened last night with a dull pencil.

Mrs. West had invited Jean and me to spend the night at her house, for Miss Irene was feeling worse and worse and needed something light to cheer her up. Well, it was just long enough after supper for us to be wishing that we hadn’t eaten so many strawberries when Mr. Fairfax

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came up the walk looking as grand and gloomy as Edgar Allan Poe, right after he had written a poem to his mother-in-law. He said let's take a walk in the moonlight for the air was *madding*. I always thought before it was *maddening*, and should be applied only to nuisances, like your next-door neighbor's children, or the piano in the flat above you; but I saw from the dictionary and the way he acted later on that he was right, both about the word and the way he applied it.

Not far down the road from Mrs. West's front gate is a very old-timey school-house, so dilapidated that Jean says she knows it's the one where the little girl said to the little boy, forty years ago:

"I'm sorry that I spelt the word,
I hate to go above you;
Because," the brown eyes lower fell;
"Because, you see, I love you!"

Jean didn't mean a bit of harm when she

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quoted it, but the sound of that last line made them look as shivery as if they had malaria. We soon found a nice place and sat down on a log that looked less like snakes than the others, and when we saw that there wasn't quite room enough for us all Jean and I had the politeness to go away out of hearing and find another log, over closer to the road. Even then we could hear, for the night was so still and we were so busy with our thoughts.

I began thinking: What if *I* should have such a hard time to find a lover that is sympathetic and systematic at the same time? Suppose Sir Reginald de Beverley isn't sympathetic about Lord Byron! Suppose he likes his parliamentary speeches better than his poetry, like one husband of a lady that I know does!

But my mind was diverted just then by hearing words coming from the direction of Miss Irene and Mr. Fairfax so much like the little girl said to the little boy forty years ago that I was astonished. I had been told that a girl

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could always keep a man from proposing when she wanted to! But he was saying that she *should* come with him and lead the untrammelled life, and she was looking pleased and frightened and was telling him to hush, but was letting him go on; and they were both standing up and holding hands in the moonlight.

“I’m not at all sure it’s the untrammelled life I’m looking for,” she said in little catchy breaths; “but I’m so wretched! And you’re the only one who cares! I suppose I may as well—oh, I wish I had somebody here to keep me from acting an idiot!”

Now, if Shakespeare or “The Duchess” had written this story they would have pretended that Doctor Bynum came around the curve in the road at that very minute and taking off his hat said: “Nay, you shall be my wife!”

But it was only Mrs. West coming down the road, carrying a heavy crocheted shawl to keep Miss Irene from catching her death of cold! But listen! The minute we got back to the house

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the telephone bell rang and it was a long-distance call for Miss Irene. She knew in a *second* from the city it was from that Doctor Bynum was at the other end of the line. She looked at that telephone like a person in the fourth story of a house afire looks at the hook-and-ladder man.

Mr. Fairfax said well, he must be going; and we all got out on the porch while she and Doctor Bynum made up their quarrel at the rate of two dollars for the first three minutes and seventy-five cents a minute extra. (I know because father sometimes talks to that city about cotton.) And he's coming down Sunday. And Jean and I are holding our breath.

We're having the very last fire of the season to-night! A big, booming, beautiful one that makes you think winter wasn't such a bad time after all! A cold spell has come, and oh, it is so cold! It makes you wonder how it had the heart to come now and cause the flowers to feel

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so out of place. But it has also caused us to have another fire and I love a fire. I even like to make them, and lots of times I tell Dilsey to let me build the fire in my room myself. I sit down on the hearth and sit and *sit*, building that fire. Then I get to looking into it and thinking. Thinking is a mighty bad habit, like Mammy Lou says.

I can't do this any more though—for to-night we're having the last fire of the season. Tomorrow spring cleaning will be gone through with and the chimneys all newspapered up. No matter how cold it gets after *that* you can't expect to have a fire after you've *sprung cleaned!* I never *am* going to spring clean at my house. The dust and soapsuds are not the worst part of house cleaning, though they are bad enough, goodness knows! What I hate worst to see is the battered old bureaus and shabby old quilts that you've kept a secret from the public for years pulled out from their corners by the hair of their heads and knocked around in the back

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yard without any pity for their poor old bones! I never see a moving van going through the city streets loaded with pitiful old furniture without thinking "That used to be *somebody's* Lares and Penates!"

By-the-way, Mammy Lou is crazy for Dovie to have some more twins so she can name them "Scylla and Chrybdis." She hasn't much hopes though, for she says lightning doesn't strike twice in the same place. Father says it wouldn't be lightning, it would be *thunder* to have two more little pickaninnies always standing around under his feet and have to explain to everybody that came along how they got their curious names.

Mammy Lou heard Miss Irene say "Scylla and Chrybdis;" Miss Irene doesn't say it any more though. Doctor Bynum didn't wait for the train to bring him down here that Sunday, but whizzed through the country in his automobile Saturday night. Then he "venied, vidied, vicied" in such a hurry that everybody in town

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knew it before nap time Sunday afternoon. Mr. Fairfax has gone away on a long trip. Jean said if he had had any sense he would have seen that Miss Irene Campbell wasn't the only girl in the world, but he didn't see it and he's gone.

Next week Jean is going home and when I think of how lonesome I'll be something nearly pops inside of me. They have been writing and writing for me to go home with Jean and stay until Rufe and Cousin Eunice and Waterloo get ready to come down this summer, but mother says I may not go unless Jean and I both promise to reform. We're not to eat any more stuffed olives nor write any more poetry—and, *think* of it! I'm to stop writing in *my diary!* Mother says I'll never have any practical sense if I don't begin now to learn things. I tell her, "Am I to blame if I love a fountain pen better than a darning needle?" The Lord made me so. And I *hate* sewing. It's as hard for me to sew as it is to keep from writing.

Yet if I go home with Jean I must quit writ-

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ing. Must give up my diary. Must not write one line of poetry, no matter how much my head is buzzing with it! Why, if poets couldn't *write* their poetry they'd burst a blood vessel! I can't even take you with me to Jean's house and read over what I have written in happier days, you poor little forsaken diary!

CHAPTER XIII

IT seems to me that the writing habit is kinder like poison oak; it's sure to break out on you in the spring, and you can never get it entirely out of your system.

I've tried my best to keep from writing, and when you have done your best and failed, why I don't believe even Robert Bruce's spider could have done any more.

I promised mother I would stop writing in my diary and I have—for such a long time that every one of the hems in my dresses has had to be let out since I wrote last. But now I just must break my promise, and I reckon if you are going to break a promise at all you might as well break it all to pieces. So I'll just dive in and tell all that happened since I wrote last.

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You remember that fluffy-skirted widow that I told you about being down here, my diary, and I sharpened seventeen pencils for—a long time ago? Well, she said that *she* believed every minute of this life was made for enjoyment. She told it to a young man that told it to father that told it to mother and I happened to hear. She said you ought to do the things you enjoy most, as long as they didn't bother anybody else, and if you did things you had to repent of afterward, why, even then, you ought to cut out your sackcloth by a becoming pattern!

Everybody in town heard that she said it, and Brother Sheffield said it was a *heathenish* thing to say! He preached his Jezebel sermon the very next Sunday, although it wasn't due until nearer Easter bonnet time. Maybe he wasn't to blame so much, though, for the presiding elder was due that Sunday and found out at the last minute he couldn't get there in time for the morning service; so Brother Sheffield had to preach the first sermon he could get his hands

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on, I reckon. The presiding elder (*I wonder* if you ought to begin him with a capital letter? I never wrote "presiding elder" before in my life and maybe never will again, so it's no use getting up to go and look for it in the dictionary) well, he got in late that afternoon and spent the night at our house where he kept the supper table in a roar telling funny tales about the ignorance and tacky ways of the country brethren he had stayed with the night before. He was an awfully popular presiding elder with his members.

But what I started out to say when I commenced writing to-night was that surely mother wouldn't be so cruel as not to want my grandchildren to know a few little last things about all the friends I've written of in here, and also a few little last things about me. I always like to read a book that winds up that way. For instance, you will enjoy hearing that Miss Irene is spending every minute of her time just about now running baby blue ribbon in her

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underclothes. And Miss Merle has long ago quit running it in hers!

Miss Irene has stopped being a "pseudo-Poe in petticoats," as father one time called her, but not to her face. Doctor Bynum told her that he thought one bright magazine story that would make a "T. B." patient sit up in bed and laugh was worth all the graveyard gloom that Poe ever wrote.

And before I get clear away from the subject of Miss Merle I must tell you that Mr. St. John is still the most bashful, though married, man I ever heard of. I never shall forget the time he wouldn't let us see his undershirt—when it was hanging in an up-stairs window, too. But Jean wrote me not long ago that when the census man came around to see how many folks lived there and how many times each one had been married and if they kept a cow, etc., Mr. St. John happened to be the one to go to the door and answer the man's questions. Now, it does seem that if he and Miss Merle have been married long

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enough for her to leave off the ribbon he might leave off the blushes; but they were all standing around looking at him, which of course made it worse. So when the census man said, "How many children is your wife the mother of?" instead of speaking out boldly, "None!" Jean said his face turned every color in the curriculum and he stammered, "Not any—that *I* know of!" And then he looked around at them as if to see whether or not *they* knew of any lying around loose about the house.

I haven't seen Jean since she was down here, but we write eighteen pages a week. I didn't get to go on my visit to her house as I expected, for we went to Florida instead. We all went, that is, us three, and Waterloo and his family besides Ann Lisbeth and Doctor Gordon.

Doctor Gordon was the one that started it. He caught pneumonia one dreary day in the early spring when he was already sick in bed, but got up and went out to the hospital to operate for appendicitis. Ann Lisbeth almost went

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into catalepsy, trying to keep him from going, but it was a very expensive appendix, he said, so he got up and went out and bottled it. The changing from his warm room to the cold air gave him pneumonia, although the doctors say it is caused by a germ. I'll never believe this, not even if I marry one!

Well, he finally got over his spell by "lysis" instead of "crisis," but I hope this will never come to Mammy Lou's ears, or she will fairly long for more twins in the Dovie family.

When Doctor Gordon got able to be out a little all the other doctors told him that he had better go to a warm climate for a month or two, for it was still so cold, so he and Ann Lisbeth persuaded Rufe and Cousin Eunice to go too, and they all wrote for us to hurry up and get ready so we could go with them.

Mother said she'd just *love* to go, but she didn't see how we possibly could, for none of us had any clothes and she had always heard that Florida was fairly alive with rich Yankees!

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Mammy Lou spoke up then and said, well, she was sure Ann looked exactly like a rich Yankee, and she was the only one that folks was going to look at anyhow! So mother took heart and we went.

Father had to have a new overcoat, for the weather has been colder this spring than ever the oldest inhabitant can tell about, and as they wrote us to get ready in such a hurry, on account of poor Doctor Gordon's cough, he didn't have time to have one made at his regular place, so he bought one ready-made, a light tan one, the poor dear! And it had two long "heimer" names from Chicago printed on the label at the collar.

We got ready in such a rush that none of us had time to rip this label out, though I lived to regret it many a time! It was too hot to wear it when we got down there, but father had got scared up about catching pneumonia, so he insisted on carrying it around on his arm all the time, inside out; and there was not *one* million-

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aire, not one tennis champion, nor famous authoress we met, but what I saw the eyes of fixed, at one time or another, on those "heimer" names!

That's one delightful thing about Florida—you get to see so many people that you never would see at home. And everybody mixes like candidates! For instance, you may have a mosquito on *you* one minute that you will see on a Russian anarchist the next. The mosquitoes down there are so big that you can easily recognize their features. And apt as not you'll go in bathing every day with a person *so famous* when he's at home that he is never invited to dine with anybody that hasn't got monogram china and *pâté de foie gras*.

I've noticed that the things people tell about after they come home from a trip depend a good deal on the disposition they carry with them on it. It's the way with Florida. If you're an optimist you'll come back and tell about the palms, roses and sunsets. If you're a pessimist you'll

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mention snakes, hotel bills and buzzards. The honest truth is there's quite enough of them all to go around.

You're impressed with the country from the first morning that you get into it and raise up (half way) in your berth and look out the car window. At first there seems to be a mighty lot of just flat scenery, with tall trees that have all their branches at the tiptop. These trees remind you of pictures of the Holy Land that you used to see in the big Bible your mother and father would give you on Sunday afternoons to keep you quiet while they could take a nap.

You begin to think that what you're seeing is too beautiful to be true, though, from the first minute you look out on a blue bay that is deep green in places, and has purple streaks in it. But when you row over to an island all covered with palms and find a strip of beach that has bushels and bushels of tiny shells, that the mermaids used to make necklaces out of—why,

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nothing on earth but your *feet* hurting so bad makes you believe it is not a dream!

Florida has all the things in it that you see when you shut your eyes and smell a jasmine flower!

The climate is fine for the lungs, but very bad on the alimentary canal and curling-iron hair!

We stopped at all the points of interest as we went on down. A point of interest is a place that the post-cards tell lies about. Still I do think Florida cards come nearer telling the truth than those of most places, for the country is very nearly as many colors as they make it out to be.

Cousin Eunice said she thought sending post-cards was the *one* melancholy pleasure of traveling, and so I bought a quarter's worth at every place.

Traveling *is* a melancholy pleasure when you have a baby that you won't let drink a drop of water unless it has had the germs all stewed in

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it. Waterloo is getting to be such a big boy now, too; but he still talks like a telegram—just the most important words of what he wants to say, with all the others left out. He's crazy about foot-ball, chewing-gum and billy-goats. And you just ought to hear him chew gum!

Among the points of interest we saw was the oldest house in America. It is a *very* interesting place. It has a marble bust of Lord Byron in it!

I don't remember another thing, I believe, except that! Oh yes, I do, too! I do remember a startling thing I heard about a very old bed in that house. I heard the guide telling that this was the bed that William the Conqueror and Maria Theresa slept on! I hate to hear folks get their history mixed, so I had just opened my mouth to say "Why, they were not *married*," when I spied the bust of his lordship in the next room. After that I didn't care how many tales they made up on William and Maria!

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Poor little Waterloo didn't much fancy the oldest house, but when we drove up to "The Fountain of Youth," and he saw the clear, sparkling "drink" that helped Ponce get rid of his double chin and crow's-feet he commenced to howl for some. Doctor Gordon had told us before we got there that we mustn't dare drink any of it unless there was a signed certificate that there wasn't any "coli" in it.

We looked all around, but as we didn't see any sign, Rufe thought maybe he'd better not give him any. There didn't *look* to be any "coli," either, but still Rufe didn't like the idea of his drinking it. When Waterloo saw that they didn't intend to give him any he commenced to kick and squall and get so red in the face with his dancing up and down that Rufe finally screamed back to the carriage that Doctor Gordon was in and asked him if he thought one little glass would hurt Waterloo. Cousin Eunice screamed back at the same time and said for Doctor Gordon to give his *honest* opin-

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ion, for she wouldn't have the little angel catch anything so far away from home for the whole of the East coast.

Doctor Gordon, who had been made nervous by his spell, screamed back to them for Heaven's sake let the little imp drink till he *busted*—only he hoped it wouldn't make him stay as *young* as he was then!

So Rufe motioned for the lady that hands you the water, with a North-of-the-Mason-and-Dixon accent, to hush talking about her friend, Ponce de Leon, long enough to give the glass an extra scrubbing and hand Waterloo some water, which she did. This didn't do as much good, though, as we had hoped for. Rufe was in such a hurry to get away from "The Fountain of Youth" that his hand trembled some and he spilt the first glassful down Waterloo's little front. This made the darling so mad, and I don't blame him either, that he slapped the second glassful out of Rufe's hand. He washed Teddy Bear's face with the third, and

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threw the fourth in Cousin Eunice's white linen lap, when she tried to soothe him.

Rufe ran his hand down into his pocket before he told the driver to drive on, for he knew that milk was fifteen cents a quart in Florida, and water was almost priceless. The lady told him that she would have to collect fifty cents for the water that Waterloo had wasted, and that washing out the glass was twenty-five cents extra.

Rufe handed her a twenty-dollar bill, but she couldn't change it. So he called back to Doctor Gordon to ask him if he could.

"*Change!*" said Doctor Gordon, looking surprised that Rufe should have asked him such an embarrassing question. "Why, I haven't a *thing* left but my watch-fob and thermometer-case and wouldn't have had them if I hadn't worn them in a chamois bag around my neck!"

So Rufe told the lady he would mail her a check for the amount with interest.

Later on we saw ostrich farms and the big-

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gest cigar factory in the world. I *think* they said it was the biggest. Anyway, if there's a bigger one I don't care about smelling it!

It's long past time for the lights to go out, mine especially, for they never want me to sit up until I get really interested in anything; but I believe I will throw a black sateen petticoat up over the transom, which I have found out you can do very well if you have two nails up there to hang it on, and tell one more little thing that happened on that trip. I say "little thing," but it seemed a monstrous big thing to me at the time.

When we were about half-way through Georgia on our way home, some of us commenced having chills. Doctor Gordon had his first, but he didn't say anything about it to Ann Lisbeth until he got to shaking so that she saw something was the matter. Then mother and Cousin Eunice had one apiece. Doctor Gordon said it wasn't anything to be alarmed about, for it was just a little malaria cropping out, but I

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felt so sorry for them that I told Ann Lisbeth if she would go with me I would go up to the baggage car and see if we could get out some heavy underclothes from our trunk.

We had to stagger through a long string of sleepers, for we were in the backest one, but we were rewarded when we finally did get to the baggage car. There was a merry-eyed express messenger in there who said he would be *glad* to pull and haul those fifteen or twenty trunks that were on top of ours! May the gods reward him, for it was an awful job! And so we got out enough clothes for our cold and destitute families.

Now, you may have noticed before this, my diary, that I am a forgetful person. I can remember the last words of Charles II, or anything like that, but I forget what I did yesterday.

I had entirely forgotten about stuffing oranges in with all our clothes when I helped mother pack our trunks! And we were in such

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a hurry in the express car that we didn't stop to shake the clothes out as we fished them up from the trays; it wouldn't have been polite to, anyway, in front of that good-looking express messenger, and we didn't have room enough. So we had just lifted things out as we came to them and eased them up in our arms as we started on back on our walk to our sleeper.

But the oranges hadn't forgotten about being there! I reckon they wanted to see what all that disturbance was about for, I cross my heart, *just* as I got opposite the swellest-looking man in that whole string of sleepers, a man with silk socks and golf sticks, a long sleeve of mother's knit corset-cover dropped down against the seat in front of him and four oranges rolled out! They rolled slowly, one by one, and dropped to the floor with muffled thuds. Then they rolled some more and didn't stop until they reached his feet.

That's how I knew he had on silk socks.

CHAPTER XIV

I'M as lonesome as *Marianna in the Moated Grange* to-night! Isn't that the lonest poem on earth? Everything about it is unsanitary, too, from the rusty flower-pots to the blue fly "buzzing in the pane." No wonder it got on Marianna's nerves, in her condition, too! But she had one thing to be thankful for—she didn't know how many germs that fly had on its feet!

I'm lonesome for Jean—or somebody! Thank goodness it is nearly time for Waterloo to come! Cousin Eunice said in a letter that we had from her to-day she was trying to raise Waterloo right, but he was a trial to her feelings! Now, poor Cousin Eunice has read Herbert Spencer for the sake of Waterloo's future education

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ever since he has been born, and she has never let him out of her sight with a nurse for fear she would feed him chewed-up chestnuts and teach him about the Devil. I reckon you spell him with a capital letter, if you don't waste them on presiding elders. But Waterloo doesn't always show how carefully he's been brought up. He is of nervous temperament and told a woman who was sewing on the machine right loud the other day: "Hus', hus'! God's sake, make noise *easy!*"

This is disheartening after all the trouble she has taken with his morals and diet and things like that! She never lets him eat the "deadly" things that Doctor Gordon is always talking about, but she *does* keep a little pure sugar candy on hand all the time to be used only as a last resort. When she can't make him do any other way on earth she uses the candy.

Speaking of deadly things reminds me of Doctor Bynum's friends, the germs. He has told Miss Irene so many stories about their un-

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pleasant ways that she got to not believing in kissing, but he said pshaw! it looked like we all had to die of germs anyhow, and so he'd rather die of that kind than any other!

Cousin Eunice's letters always tell us so many interesting things about all our friends in the city. She and Ann Lisbeth still live close neighbors, but they have both bought beautiful places out on one of the pikes and each one is claiming to be more countrified than the other. One day Ann Lisbeth ran over and told Cousin Eunice that Doctor Gordon had heard an owl in their yard the night before, but Cousin Eunice told her that wasn't anything! She and Rufe had had a *bat* in their bedroom!

Doctor Gordon has two automobiles now. He had them the last time I was in the city and I got to find out exactly what "limousine" means. I had an idea before that it meant *dark green*, because—oh, well, I needn't tell the reason; it was silly enough to think such a thing without making excuses for it. But you know

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so many swell cars *are* painted dark green, and so many swell cars are limousines!

Ann Lisbeth is a great help to Doctor Gordon in his practice, he says. She always remembers the different babies' names and looks up subjects for him in his surgical books that would knock the knee-cap off of Jean's little word, "genuflections."

No matter how fine a doctor a lady's husband is she is never permitted to mention it to her friends, for this is called "unethical." But if she's expecting company of an afternoon she can happen to have a bottle with a queer thing inside setting on the mantelpiece and when the company asks what on earth that thing is she can say, "For goodness' sake! My husband must have forgotten that! Why that's Senator Himuck's appendix!"

Ann Lisbeth seems to get sweeter every year and you would never know she has a foreign accent now except on Sunday night when the cook's away and the gas stove doesn't do right.

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Another good piece of news Cousin Eunice wrote to-day was that the Youngs are going to try it again at the bungalow this summer. Professor Young has to go somewhere to rest up from his studies. For nearly eighteen months now he's been sitting up late at night and spending the whole of Saturdays, even taking his coffee out to the laboratory in a thermos bottle, studying pharmacy. He is delighted with the progress he has made, for he says he has not only learned how to make a perfectly splendid cold cream for his wife's complexion, but has discovered just which bad-smelling stuff put with another bad-smelling stuff is best to develop his films. He says his knowledge of pharmacy has saved him a lot of money in this way.

Speaking of curious couples reminds me of the Gayles. They're not half as queer now as they were before they married though. At present they are neither in Heaven, nor on earth, exactly, but they are cruising on the Mediterranean. They send me post-cards from

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every place and I stick them in my album with great pride.

Another family that we're always glad to hear from is the Macdonalds. Poor little fluffy-haired Miss Cis! I reckon the very last of her dimples will soon be changed into wrinkles, for there's *another* one since the twins! Nobody can say that Miss Cis is not bearing up bravely, though. She does all she can to present a stylish, straight-front appearance when she goes out, which isn't often. But at home they are all perfectly happy together, Mr. Macdonald getting down on the floor to play bear, and if he *does* look more like a devil's horse while he's doing it, with his long arms and legs, the twins don't know the difference.

Marrying has helped Julius' looks more than anybody I ever saw. His cheeks have filled out until he's as handsome as a floor-walker. And they're so contented that Marcella says actually when she finds a pin pointing toward her she doesn't know what to wish for.

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You may have caught on to it before now, my diary, that the reason I'm telling you this very last news of all our friends is because I'm going to stop writing *sure enough* to-night! I'm ashamed to keep breaking my promise to mother.

The only ones I've left out, I believe, are Aunt Laura and Bertha. I wish I had forgotten them for I don't like to say anything hateful in my diary.

Aunt Laura has joined some kind of New Thoughters and has grown quantities of new brown hair on the strength of it. And she dresses in champagne silk all the time.

As for Bertha—she *lives* to keep up with the "best people," meaning by this that she runs up to the hairdresser's every other day to see if she can learn how many "society men" have thrown their wives down the steps or poured boiling coffee over them since she last heard.

I'm sorry I thought of Bertha so near the last, for I don't want to leave you with a bad

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taste in your mouth, my diary. So I'll branch off and mention something sweet right away.

That blessed Waterloo! He's the sweetest thing I know anything about! Just about this time I reckon he's begging his "Daddy-boy" to sing Feep Alsie, Ben Bolt, for that's been his precious little sleepy song ever since he's been born.

When I think of those three and how happy they are, and how satisfied they are just to be together, I know that Rufe told me the truth that day, a long, long time ago! There is only one subject worth writing about—or one object worth living for! May every one of you grandchildren find just such an object, and be as happy as they are while living for it!

It does seem that I ought to be able to think of something beautiful to wind up my diary with! Everything about me is beautiful! The honeysuckle is smelling like the very soul of spring and love just outside my window—and there's a bust of Lord Byron on my mantelpiece

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close by. Such a tiny bust—the curly head just fits into the palm of my hand—when I get grown I'm going to have one big enough to burn candles before! Not that I shall burn candles before it—for, to tell the truth, I'd much rather be burning my fingers cooking oatmeal for some big, brown-eyed "Daddy-boy" and tiny, brown-eyed Waterloo!

Mammy Lou came to my window just as I wrote this last and stuck her head in.

"Name o' Deuteronomy!" she said in a loud whisper when she saw this book open before me. "What good'll your *gran'children* do you, I'd like to know—if you set up all night and lose your looks so you'll nuvver fin' a hasban'?"

THE END

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